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RED CROSS OF COURAGE

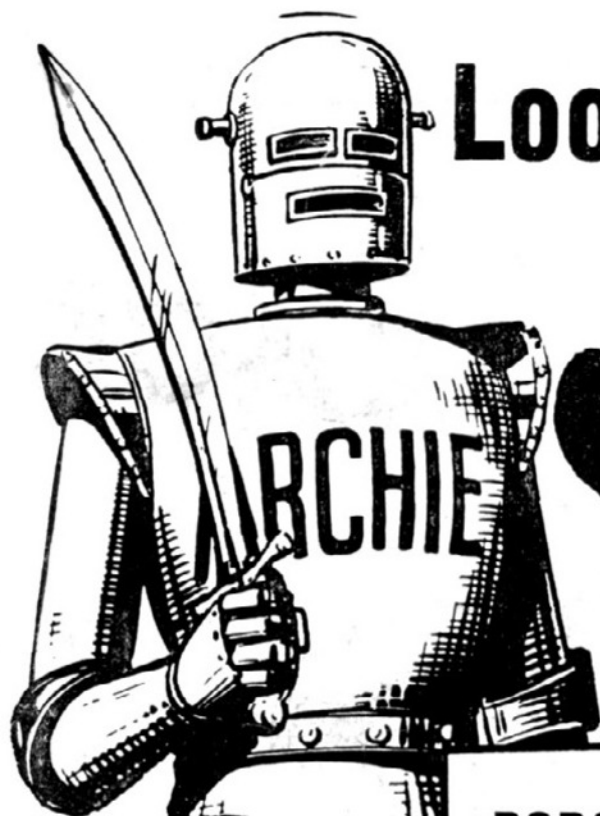
RED CROSS *of* COURAGE

IN THE TWELVE DESPERATE MONTHS AFTER THE TREACHEROUS JAPANESE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOUR, THE YELLOW TIDE OF TYRANNY SUBMERGED ISLAND AFTER PEACEFUL ISLAND ACROSS THE PACIFIC. EARLY IN 1942, THE GRINNING WARRIORS OF NIPPON SET FOOT ON THE SANDS OF JAVA.

BANZAI!!



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LION

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FIVE STAR WEEKLY

Chapter 1 FIRST BETRAYAL

A HANDFUL OF DUTCH, AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH TROOPS FIERCELY CONTESTED THE LANDING, BUT SHEER FORCE OF NUMBERS BEAT THEM BACK INTO THE JUNGLE, THERE TO MAKE A LAST STAND AGAINST OVERWHELMING ODDS...



THE WEARY PARTY OF AUSTRALIAN SOLDIERS TURNED GRIMLY IN THAT LITTLE JUNGLE CLEARING TO FACE THE ENEMY. HERE THEY WOULD STAND AND FIGHT... UNTIL THE TRENCH THEY HAD DUG BECAME A GRAVE! BUT THE TRENCHES WERE ONLY HALF DUG WHEN THE JAPANESE STRUCK...



THE TREES DISGORGED A HORDE OF SLIT-EYED WARRIORS. FIRING UNTIL THE RIFLES SCORCHED THEIR FINGERS, THE HANDFUL OF AUSTRALIANS FOUGHT... AND DIED...



SERGEANT JACK CARMODY STILL FOUGHT BACK AS THE MEN AROUND HIM DIED, COOLLY PICKING OFF A JAP WITH EVERY SHOT BUT THEN A GRENADE BURST IN THE TRENCH... IT WAS THE END OF ALL RESISTANCE.



4
Red Cross of Courage

THE TOUGH SERGEANT WAS HURLED ON TO HIS FACE AND AT THE SAME MOMENT, THE ENEMY SOLDIERS BURST OUT OF THE JUNGLE AND INTO THE NOW SILENT AUSTRALIAN POSITION. GRINNING, THE JAPANESE OFFICER GAVE A CRUEL COMMAND.

MAKE SURE
THE DOGS ARE
NOT SHAMMING,
MEN!



THIS WAS THE USUAL JAPANESE PRACTICE. COLD BLOODEDLY THE BAYONETS PLUNGED. A STOCKY SOLDIER LOOKED AT THE HUDDLED FIGURE OF THE AUSTRALIAN SERGEANT AND MOVED TOWARDS IT, BAYONET POISED...

MISSED!



JACK CARMODY WAS STILL ALIVE ~ BY MERE INCHES ! THAT WAS THE DISTANCE BETWEEN HIS CLENCHED JAW AND THE HEAVY STEEL BLADE WHICH HAD GONE INTO THE EARTH. AND THE BAYONET WAS RAISED AGAIN WHEN ...

WE HAVE ORDERS TO RETIRE, MEN. WE HAVE ADVANCED TOO FAR AND THE LINE MUST BE STRAIGHTENED. YOU, THERE, COME BACK!



THE BARKED COMMAND OF THE OFFICER ARRESTED THE JAP SOLDIER'S ARM. OBEDIENTLY, HE TURNED AND TROTTED AWAY. AS THE YELLOW PUTTEES BRUSHED BACK INTO THE JUNGLE, TWO HEADS WERE CAUTIOUSLY RAISED...

PHEW, I THOUGHT THAT WAS OUR LOT, SARGE!

ME, TOO, COBBER. WE'LL GIVE THE NIPS TWO MINUTES, THEN WE'LL GET GOING... THE OTHER WAY!



QUICKLY AND SILENTLY, THE TWO SURVIVORS OF THAT BLOODY ACTION GATHERED THE WEAPONS FROM THEIR COMRADES WHO WOULD NEVER USE THEM AGAIN...

WE'LL MAKE FOR THE NORTH COAST, HERB. I RECKON WHAT'S LEFT OF OUR TROOPS WILL MAKE A STAND THERE!

OKAY BY ME, SARGE! I COULD DO WITH ANOTHER CRACK AT THOSE JAPS!



SERGEANT JACK CARMODY AND PRIVATE HERB SAYERS OF THE AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY WERE NOW ON THEIR OWN IN THE HOSTILE JUNGLE. THEIR GOAL LAY TO THE NORTH, MANY WEARY MILES AWAY. BUT FATE WAS TO INTERRUPT THEIR JOURNEY...

THERE'S A BUILDING UP AHEAD! LOOKS LIKE A HOSPITAL! LET'S TAKE A LOOK-SEE!



THREE HOURS HARD TREKKING HAD BROUGHT THE AUSSIES TO A ROAD AND A WHITE-WALLED HOSPITAL... AND A CURIOUS SCENE...

THANK YOU, MOTO! I WISH ALL YOUR COUNTRYMEN WERE AS CO-OPERATIVE AS YOU ARE! IT IS REALLY TOO BAD OF THEM TO FORCE US TO EVACUATE THE HOSPITAL LIKE THIS!

PARDON, HONOURABLE DOCTOR SCOTT, WE JAPANESE WISH ONLY FOR PEACE. IT WOULD BE WISER TO STAY HERE AND WORK WITH THE JAPANESE ARMY TO HELP THIS POOR ISLAND RECOVER FROM THE OPPRESSION OF THE DUTCH!



THE SMALL HOSPITAL AT BANDONG WAS BEING HURRIEDLY EVACUATED IN THE FACE OF THE JAPANESE INVASION. DOCTOR BRIAN SCOTT FOUND THIS RATHER IRKSOME, AS HE POLITELY TOLD HIS SMOOTHLY SMILING ORDERLIES. BUT THOSE ORDERLIES WERE JAPANESE!

JAPS,
SARGE!

THEY MUST HAVE BEEN
WORKING AS ORDERLIES IN THIS
HOSPITAL. LET'S GET A BIT CLOSER...
I DON'T TRUST THE JAPS LIKE
THAT POMMIE SEEMS TO!



CREEPING CLOSER ALONG THE
ROADSIDE, THE TWO AUSSIES
WATCHED THE THREE FIGURES
ON THE ROAD WITH TENSE
SUSPICION. THE JAP ORDERLY
HAD REQUESTED THE YOUNG
ENGLISH DOCTOR TO STAY
WITH SINISTER BLANDNESS.
SUDDENLY...

I REGRET
YOU WILL NOT
LISTEN TO ME AND
STAY, HONOURABLE
DOCTOR! IT IS MOST
REGRETTABLE...

HE'S MINE,
HERB!



THE YOUNG ENGLISH DOCTOR WAS A HUMANE MAN, AND AN INNOCENT ONE. HE COULD STILL HARDLY BELIEVE THAT THE SUBORDINATES HE TRUSTED TREACHEROUSLY MEANT TO KILL HIM. BUT THE KNIFE WAS SHARP AND WICKED PROOF ...

COME ON, DOC...
UNLESS YOU WANT TO STAY
BEHIND WITH THOSE YELLOW
RATS AND FIND OUT HOW HANDY
THEIR ARMY FRIENDS ARE WITH
THE POLITE WORD AND THE
KNIFE IN THE RIBS!

I'M COMING,
SERGEANT, BUT IT'S
TERRIBLE, TERRIBLE!



WITH A LAST BAFFLED LOOK AT THE HELPLESS JAPS, THE DOCTOR CLIMBED INTO THE JEEP. SERGEANT JACK CARMODY LET IN THE CLUTCH AND THE DESPERATE TEN MILE DRIVE TO THE COAST BEGAN.

I SUPPOSE
YOU SAVED MY LIFE,
SERGEANT! I'M GRATEFUL!
YOU MUST SAIL WITH ME
AND MY PATIENTS ON
CAPTAIN VAN DOON'S
SHIP!

OUR JOB IS TO FIGHT, DOC...
IF THERE'S ANY ARMY LEFT TO
FIGHT WITH, WE'LL SEE WHAT
THE SITUATION IS AT.
SUNDA!



WITH THE SPEED OF A PANTHER, THE LEAN AUSTRALIAN LUNGED ACROSS THE ROAD. ONE LEATHERY HAND CLOSED ON THE JAP'S DOWNWARD-THRUSTING KNIFE ARM LIKE A VICE.



WITHIN SECONDS, BOTH JAPS WERE HELPLESS, SNARLING PRISONERS. DOCTOR BRIAN SCOTT STARED IN HORRIFIED ASTONISHMENT FROM THE TWO AUSTRALIANS TO THE HATE-TWISTED FACES OF HIS ORDERLIES.

NEVER TRUST A JAP, DOC! THEY TALK SMOOTH BUT THEY STRIKE FAST! NOW, WHAT'S THE PICTURE HERE?



Chapter 2. ACT OF MERCY

THE SMALL PORT OF SUNDA ON THE NORTH COAST OF JAVA HAD BEEN BOMBED BY THE ADVANCING JAPANESE TWO HOURS BEFORE. OILY BLACK SMOKE WAS SMEARING ITS SHATTERED ROOFS AS THE JEEP SCREECHED TO A HALT ON THE JETTY.

HURRY, DOCTOR! WE HAVE JUST HEARD THAT THE ARMY HAS SURRENDERED! THE JAPS WILL BE HERE AT ANY MOMENT!

OKAY, DOC! LET'S GET THIS STUFF ABOARD! I DON'T RECKON TO DO ANY SURRENDERING TO THE NIPS!

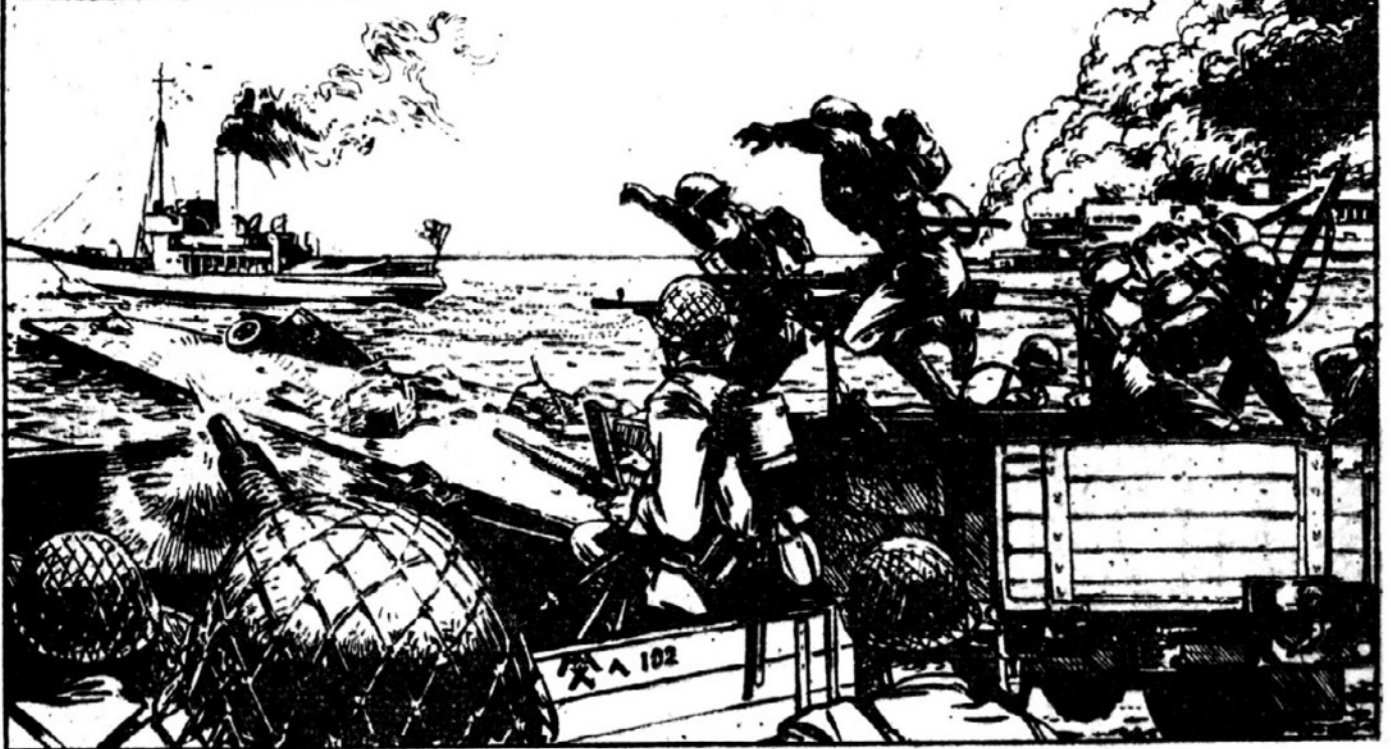
THE TOUGH AUSTRALIAN WAS NOT STAYING BEHIND TO BECOME A PRISONER OF THE JAPANESE. WITH THE DOCTOR AND HERB SAYERS, HE MANHANDLED THE MEDICAL STORES UP THE GANGPLANK UNDER THE ANXIOUS EYES OF THE FAT DUTCH SKIPPER.

BE QUICK, DOCTOR, FOR PITY'S SAKE! I DO NOT WISH TO HAVE CAPTURED MY BEAUTIFUL SHIP!

THIS IS THE LAST LOAD, CAPTAIN!



HARDLY HAD THE *M.S. BRUGES* CAST OFF, THAN THE FIRST JAPANESE SOLDIER REACHED THE JETTY. AS THE SMALL SHIP CLEARED THE BURNING HARBOUR, JAP BULLETS TORE SAVAGE HOLES IN THE CANVAS RED CROSS STRETCHED ON HER AFTER DECK.



BUT THE RANGE WAS ALREADY TOO GREAT. AT FULL SPEED THE SLIM WHITE SHIP WAS SOON HEADING FOR THE OPEN SEA, WITH A WHITE BONE OF FOAM IN HER TEETH. AND ON THE BRIDGE...

CAPTAIN, THIS IS SERGEANT CARMODY AND PRIVATE SAYERS OF THE AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY. SERGEANT, THIS IS CAPTAIN VAN DOON, MASTER OF THE MOTOR SHIP, *BRUGES*!

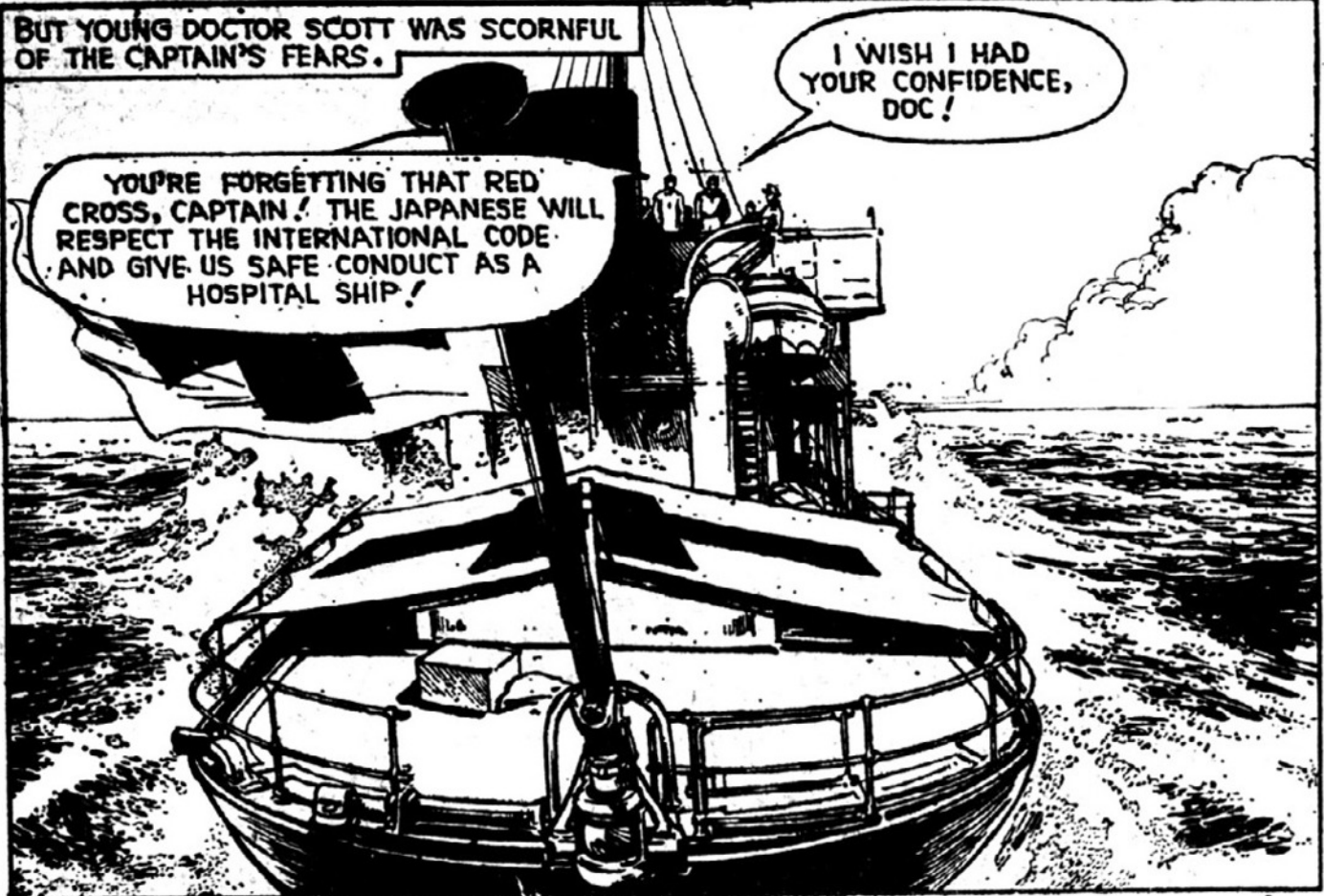
IT IS GOOD TO HAVE YOU ABOARD, GENTLEMEN! THIS MY BEAUTIFUL SHIP WAS A LUXURY CRUISE YACHT UNTIL THE DOCTOR ENTRUSTED ME WITH HIS PATIENTS! I AM SAD I CANNOT OFFER YOU MUCH COMFORT!



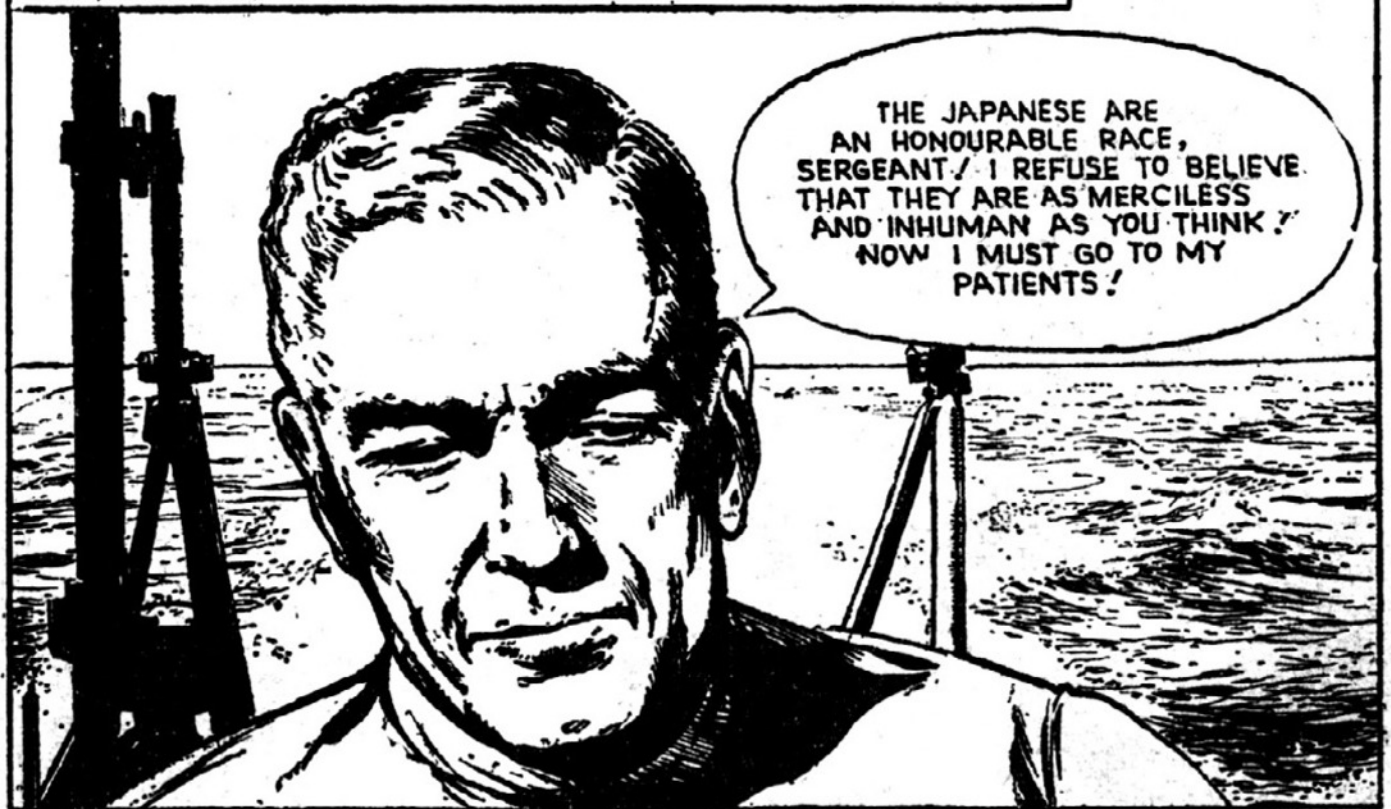
THE *BRUGES* HAD BEEN LAZILY CRUISING IN THE PACIFIC WHEN THE YELLOW TIDE OF THE JAPANESE INVASION CAUGHT HER IN JAVA. NOW SHE WAS AN IMPROVISED HOSPITAL SHIP ON THE RUN.



BUT YOUNG DOCTOR SCOTT WAS SCORNFUL OF THE CAPTAIN'S FEARS.



EVEN THE TREACHERY OF HIS HOSPITAL ORDERLIES HAD NOT SHAKEN THE YOUNG MEDICO'S FAITH IN THE BASIC GOODNESS AND HUMANITY OF ALL MEN, WHATEVER THEIR RACE...



THE JAPANESE ARE AN HONOURABLE RACE, SERGEANT! I REFUSE TO BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE AS MERCILESS AND INHUMAN AS YOU THINK! NOW I MUST GO TO MY PATIENTS!

WHILE THE HOSPITAL SHIP SAILED ON ACROSS AN EMPTY OCEAN, THE TWO AUSTRALIANS TALKED OVER THE DOCTOR'S OBSTINATE IDEALISM. TWO SULTRY DAYS PASSED.

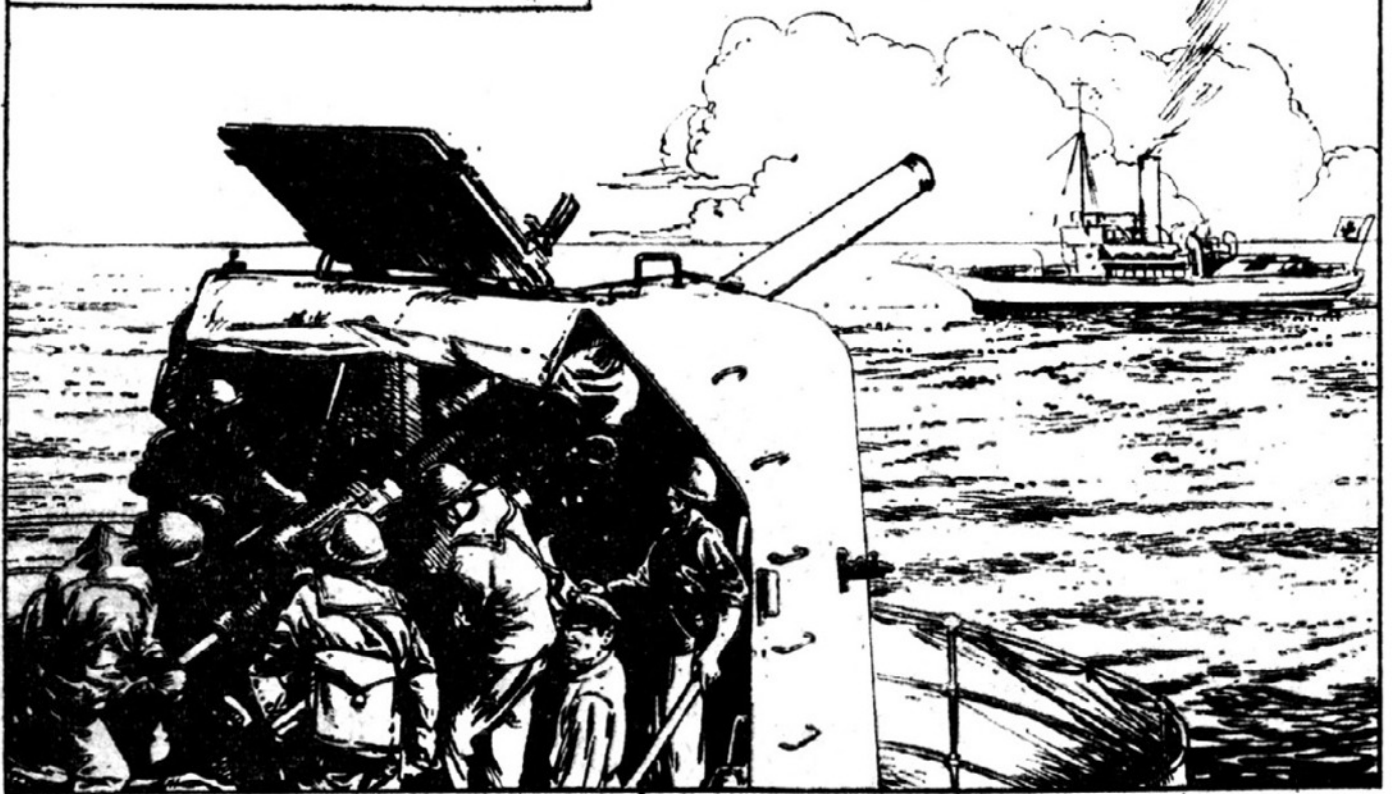


WAAL, I HOPE THE DOC'S RIGHT ABOUT THE JAPS... BUT I'M PUTTING A TIME FUSE ON THIS PACKET IN CASE WE NEED TO SCUTTLE THIS TUB! NO JAP IS GOING TO TAKE ME ALIVE!

LOOK, SARGE... SMOKE OUT THERE ON THE HORIZON!

Red Cross of Courage

OUT OF THAT SMUDGE OF SMOKE ON THE RIM OF THE SEA GLIDED A SLIM AND DEADLY WARSHIP.. IT WAS A DESTROYER... AND THE FLAG IT FLEW BORE A BLOOD-RED RISING SUN!



THEIR THROATS DRY, THE WHITE MEN ON THE *BRUGES* STOOD GRIMLY AT THE RAIL AND WATCHED THE ENEMY WARSHIP DRAW NEARER AND NEARER. AND STILL THE YAWNING JAPANESE GUNS WERE SILENT.

WELL, DOC, I RECKON WE'LL KNOW SOON ENOUGH WHICH OF US IS RIGHT ABOUT THE JAPS!

YES, SERGEANT, WE WILL! LISTEN, THEY'RE HAILING US!



SUDDENLY A LISPING VOICE FLOATED ACROSS THE NARROW GAP BETWEEN THE TWO SHIPS. THE JAPANESE CAPTAIN, AND NOT HIS GUNS, WAS SPEAKING...

I WISH YOU NO HARM, GENTLEMEN.. NO DOUBT YOU ARE IN NEED OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND THESE I WILL BE HAPPY TO GIVE YOU! LET YOUR DOCTOR COME ABOARD MY SHIP AND HE SHALL SELECT THE MEDICINE HE WANTS!



SMOOTH AND GENEROUS AS THAT OFFER WAS, IT DID NOT CONVINCE THE TOUGH AND SUSPICIOUS AUSTRALIAN SERGEANT. HE PUT OUT A HAND TO RESTRAIN THE EAGER YOUNG DOCTOR.

NO, SERGEANT, I CAN'T! THEY ARE OFFERING US HELP, LIKE HUMANE MEN, AND I INTEND TO ACCEPT IT!

ARE YOU CRAZY, DOC? THOSE CRAFTY RATS ARE PLAYING A TRICK ON US, CAN'T YOU SEE THAT?

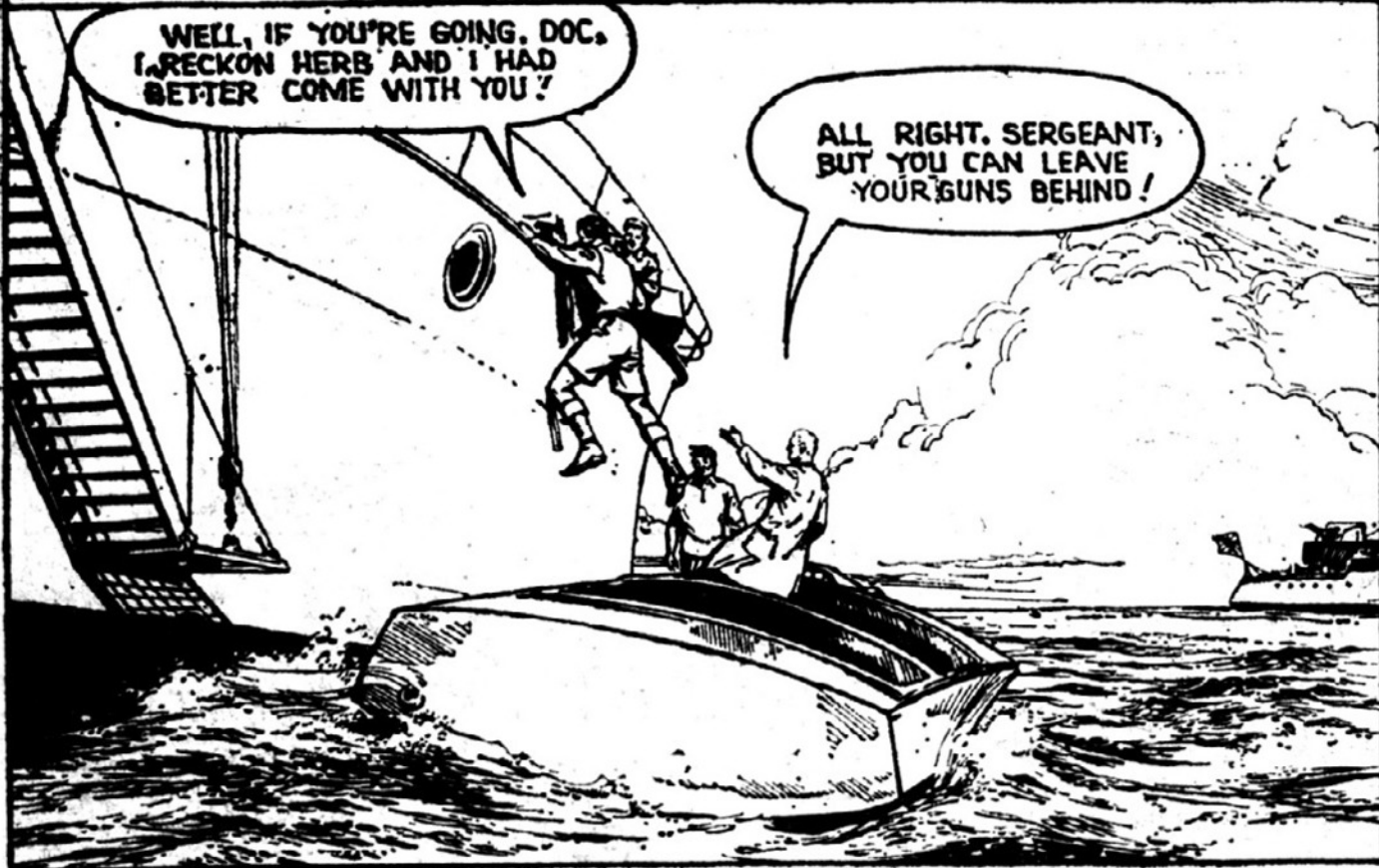


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DOCTOR BRIAN SCOTT QUICKLY CLIMBED INTO THE WAITING BOAT. ABOVE HIM ...

WELL, IF YOU'RE GOING, DOC,
I RECKON HERB AND I HAD
BETTER COME WITH YOU!

ALL RIGHT, SERGEANT,
BUT YOU CAN LEAVE
YOUR GUNS BEHIND!



SERGEANT CARMODY GRIMLY LEFT HIS GUNS BEHIND AND HERB SAYERS
UNEASILY FOLLOWED HIM INTO THE SMALL BOAT WHICH ARROWED
OUT TO THE WAITING ENEMY DESTROYER.

RECKON I'D FEEL A LOT SAFER WITH MY
GUN HANDY, SARGE!

YOU WON'T NEED IT THIS TRIP,
HERB! THESE NIPS AREN'T GOING
TO MAKE A MONKEY OUT OF US!



IN SPITE OF HIS FAITH, THE YOUNG DOCTOR FELT A CHILL OF FEAR AS HE CLIMBED THE SHAKING ROPE LADDER. BUT ON DECK...

THANK YOU, CAPTAIN.
THIS IS A GENEROUS
OFFER OF YOURS!

WE JAPANESE ARE NOT
UNCIVILISED, DOCTOR! WE WISH ONLY
FOR PEACE, AND THE CO-OPERATION OF
SUCH TRAINED MEN AS YOURSELF. THE
MEDICINE IS IN THE STOREROOM BELOW
DECKS... MY MEN WILL SHOW
YOU THE WAY!



THE JAPANESE CAPTAIN WAS SOFT-SPOKEN AND COURTEOUS.
NOW THE YOUNG ENGLISHMAN KNEW HE HAD BEEN RIGHT...
HERE WAS A HUMANE ENEMY! CHEERFULLY HE FOLLOWED
THE JAPANESE SAILOR BELOW DECKS.

STAY WITH ME,
HERB, AND DON'T
TALK!



THE STOREROOM WAS IN THE BOWELS OF THE SHIP. THE TOUGH AUSTRALIAN SERGEANT WENT WITH THE DOCTOR THROUGH THE OPEN WATERTIGHT DOOR AND LOOKED NARROWLY ABOUT HIM.



WHILE THE DOCTOR TRIUMPHANTLY EXAMINED THE CASE OF PRECIOUS DRUGS, JACK CARMODY NODDED MEANINGLY AT HERB. THE BURLY AUSTRALIAN SAW WHAT HIS SERGEANT WAS DOING ... AND BEGAN TO GRIN...



THE DOCTOR HAD GLANCED CURIOUSLY ACROSS AT THE SILENT AUSTRALIANS WHEN A FAINT TREMOR SHOOK THE PLATES ABOVE HIS HEAD. FOR A BRIEF MOMENT HE WONDERED WHAT IT MEANT. THEN ...

LET'S GO SEE, SHALL WE, DOC? I RECKON THIS NIP IS ON THE JOKE, WHATEVER IT IS YOUR DECENT JAPS HAVE PUT OVER ON YOU!

THE SHIP'S MOVING! WHAT ARE THEY UP TO?



PANTING, DOCTOR SCOTT REACHED THE DECK. GRIPPING THE RAIL, HE STARED SEAWARD AGHAST. ALREADY THE JAPANESE DESTROYER WAS FORGING AWAY FROM THE LITTLE HOSPITAL SHIP.

WELL, DOC, SO MUCH FOR YOUR HUMANE JAP!

I-I DON'T UNDERSTAND!

THE CAPTAIN WISHES YOU WILL KINDLY JOIN HIM ON THE BRIDGE, GENTLEMEN!



AGONISINGLY, THE YOUNG DOCTOR REALISED THAT HE HAD BEEN DUPED. WITH ONE SHAMEFACED GLANCE AT THE LEAN AUSTRALIAN SERGEANT, HE CLIMBED LEADENLY TO THE BRIDGE



THE JAP CAPTAIN WAS STILL SMILING. BUT NOW THE SMILE WAS AS VICIOUS AS THE NAKED BLADE OF A KNIFE, AND THE VOICE AS SOFT AS POISON!

I HAVE NEED OF A SKILLED DOCTOR, MY FRIEND, BUT THAT NICE LITTLE WHITE SHIP IS USELESS TO THE IMPERIAL JAPANESE NAVY! SO! YOU ARE PRIVILEGED TO WITNESS THE ACCURACY OF MY GUNNERS AS THEY DISPATCH IT TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA!



HORROR GAVE WAY IN THE YOUNG DOCTOR'S MIND TO BLIND SEARING HATRED FOR THIS MERCILESS MAN IN FRONT OF HIM. HE MOVED CONVULSIVELY FORWARD...

YOU CAN'T DO THIS, YOU DEVIL, IT'S INHUMAN! THAT'S A HOSPITAL SHIP! YOU'LL BE MURDERING HELPLESS MEN!

PREPARE TO FIRE, LIEUTENANT!

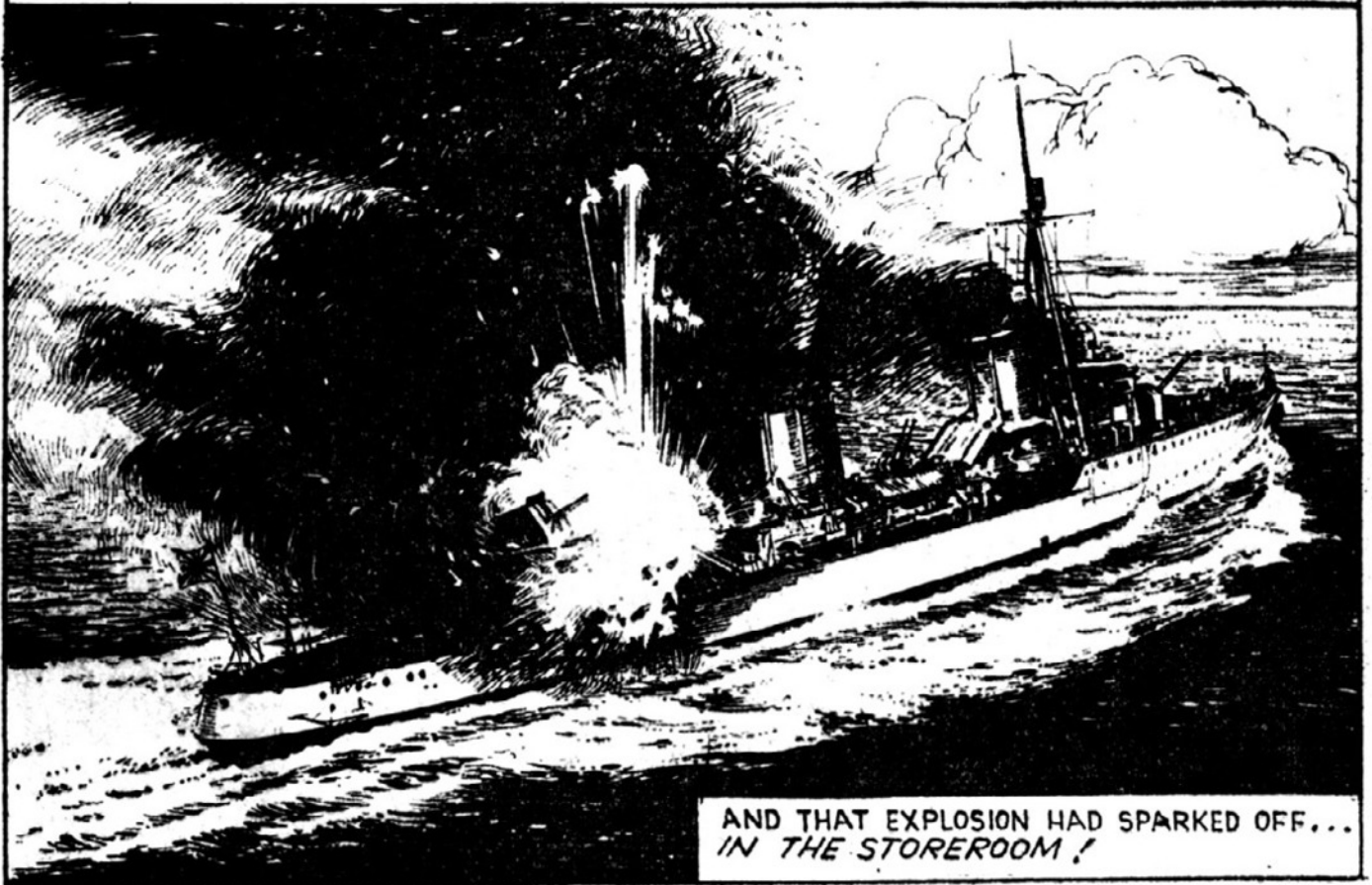


BUT BEHIND THE STRUGGLING DOCTOR AT THIS TERRIBLE MOMENT, SERGEANT JACK CARMODY WAS ACTING WITH STRANGE CALMNESS. HE WAS LOOKING AT HIS WATCH AND COUNTING - COUNTING DOWN...

FIVE-FOUR-THREE-TWO-ONE-



AT THE COUNT OF ZERO, THE TOUGH AUSTRALIAN FLUNG HIMSELF FORWARD ON THE DECK. AT THE SAME INSTANT, HERB SAYERS THRUST THE DOCTOR DOWN BENEATH HIM. THE JAP OFFICERS WERE STILL GAPIING WHEN A GIGANTIC EXPLOSION RIPPED THE STERN OF THE DESTROYER OPEN ...



HERB HELPED THE DAZED DOCTOR TO HIS FEET...



SCRAMBLING ACROSS THE STEEPLY SLOPING DECKS OF THE STRICKEN ENEMY WARSHIP, THE ENGLISHMAN AND THE TWO AUSTRALIANS REACHED THE SIDE AND HURLED THEMSELVES INTO THE CLEAR BLUE WATERS OF THE PACIFIC...



AS THE SERGEANT SURFACED, HE SAW HIS COMPANIONS CLINGING TO A FLOATING PLANK.

BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND, SERGEANT. YOU KNEW IT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN!

I SHOULD HAVE DONE, DOC. IT WAS MY TIME BOMB THAT BLEW UP! I'D MADE IT IN CASE WE WANTED TO SCUTTLE THE BRUGES... BUT IT CAME IN HANDY FOR THIS LITTLE JOB!



WHILE JACK CARMODY SPOKE, THE DOCTOR SUDDENLY REMEMBERED THAT QUESTION HE HAD ASKED THE AUSSIE IN THE STOREROOM. NOW HE KNEW THE ANSWER!

SO THAT WAS WHAT YOU WERE DOING IN THE STOREROOM! YOU KNEW EVEN THEN THAT THE SMILING DEVIL WAS PLANNING TREACHERY!

HE WAS A JAP, WASN'T HE?
I NEVER TRUST A JAP!



MEANWHILE THE *BRUGES* WAS CLOSING RAPIDLY ON THE STRUGGLING SURVIVORS IN THE WATER, AND THE DUTCH CAPTAIN WAS SEARCHING DESPERATELY WITH HIS BINOCULARS.

THERE THEY ARE!
GO IN CLOSE, HELMSMAN!
STAND BY TO PICK
THEM UP!



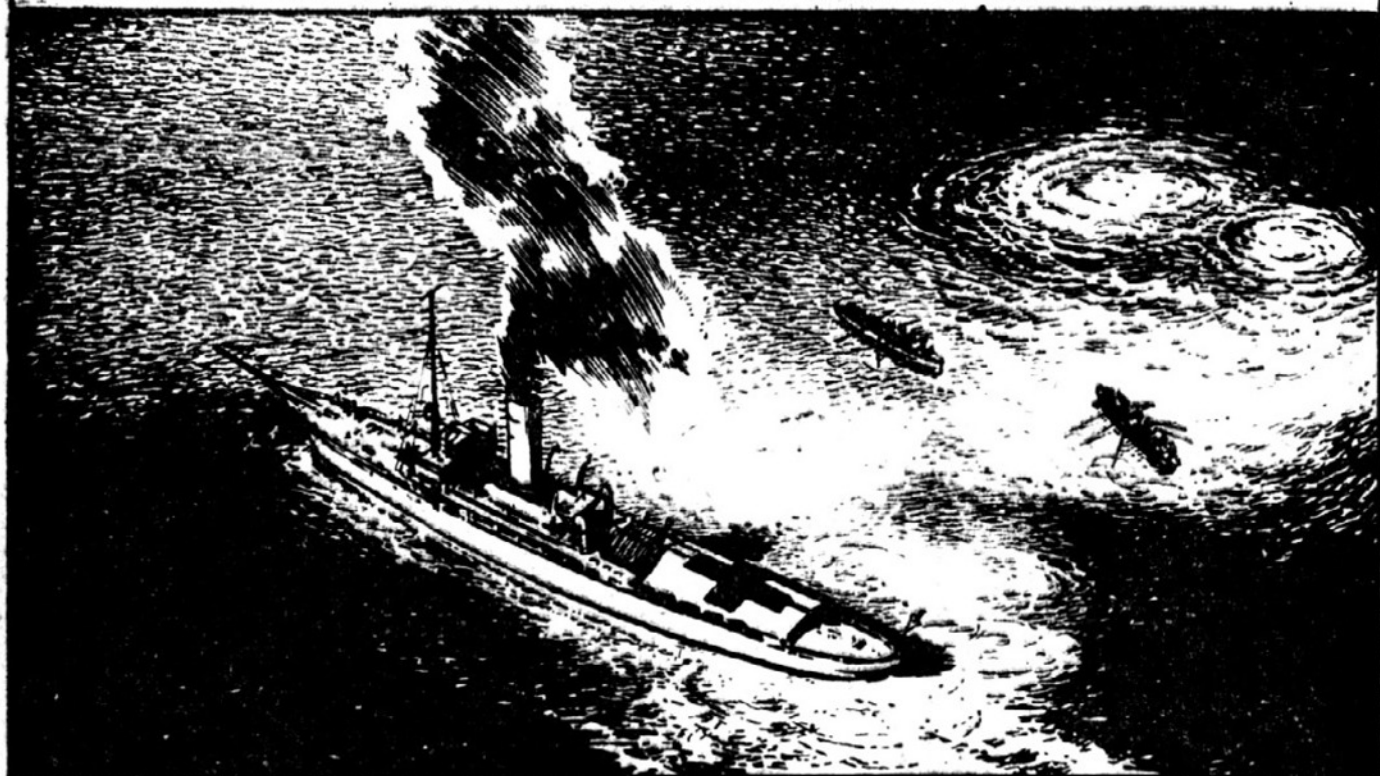
RAPIDLY THE WHITE HULLED HOSPITAL SHIP DREW ALONGSIDE THE MEN CLINGING TO THE PLANK. AS HE CLIMBED THE ROPE LADDER, THE LEAN AUSTRALIAN LOOKED BRIEFLY BACK AT THE DEATH THROES OF THE JAP DESTROYER.



SERGEANT JACK CARMODY HAD BACKED HIS BITTER EXPERIENCE OF THE TWISTED JAPANESE MIND, AND HE HAD BEEN PROVED SHATTERINGLY RIGHT.



AS THOUGH BY NATURAL RIGHT, THE LEAN AUSTRALIAN HAD TAKEN OVER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MEN ON THE HOSPITAL SHIP. NOW, AT A WORD FROM HIM, THE DUTCH CAPTAIN PUT THE SHIP ABOUT ON AN ERRAND OF MERCY.



ONE BY ONE, THE COWERING JAPANESE SAILORS WERE HAULED ABOARD. THE THIRTEENTH AND LAST TO CLIMB OVER THE RAIL CRINGED AWAY FROM JACK CARMODY WITH A HUMBLE BUT FAMILIAR SMILE.

SO IT'S YOU, SMILING JIM! WELL, YOU ONLY WISHED FOR PEACE AND NOW YOU'RE GOING TO GET IT... IN A LOCKED CABIN UNTIL WE REACH DARWIN!



THE DESTROYER'S TREACHEROUS CAPTAIN AND HIS MEN WERE HERDED BELOW DECK. JACK WAS TAKING NO CHANCES WITH THEM ... EVEN THOUGH HE HAD WASTED A PRECIOUS HOUR IN THOSE DANGEROUS WATERS TO PICK THEM UP.

YOU STAY HERE WITH A GUN, HERB. IF THEY TRY TO BREAK OUT - YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO! WE'LL GUARD THESE LITTLE TWISTERS DAY AND NIGHT UNTIL WE MAKE PORT!

OKAY BY ME, SARGE!



HERB WAS POSTED OUTSIDE THE LOCKED DOOR WITH AN AUTOMATIC RIFLE. THEN JACK CALLED THE DOCTOR AND TOOK HIM TO THE AFTER DECK ...

YOU RELIEVE HERB OUTSIDE THAT CABIN IN TWO HOURS' TIME, DOC! AND MEANWHILE WE'LL STOW THIS RED CROSS AWAY ... MAYBE THE JAPS WILL LEAVE US ALONE WITHOUT THIS TO ROUSE THE BEAST IN THEM!

SERGEANT ... OH WELL, YOU MAY BE RIGHT!

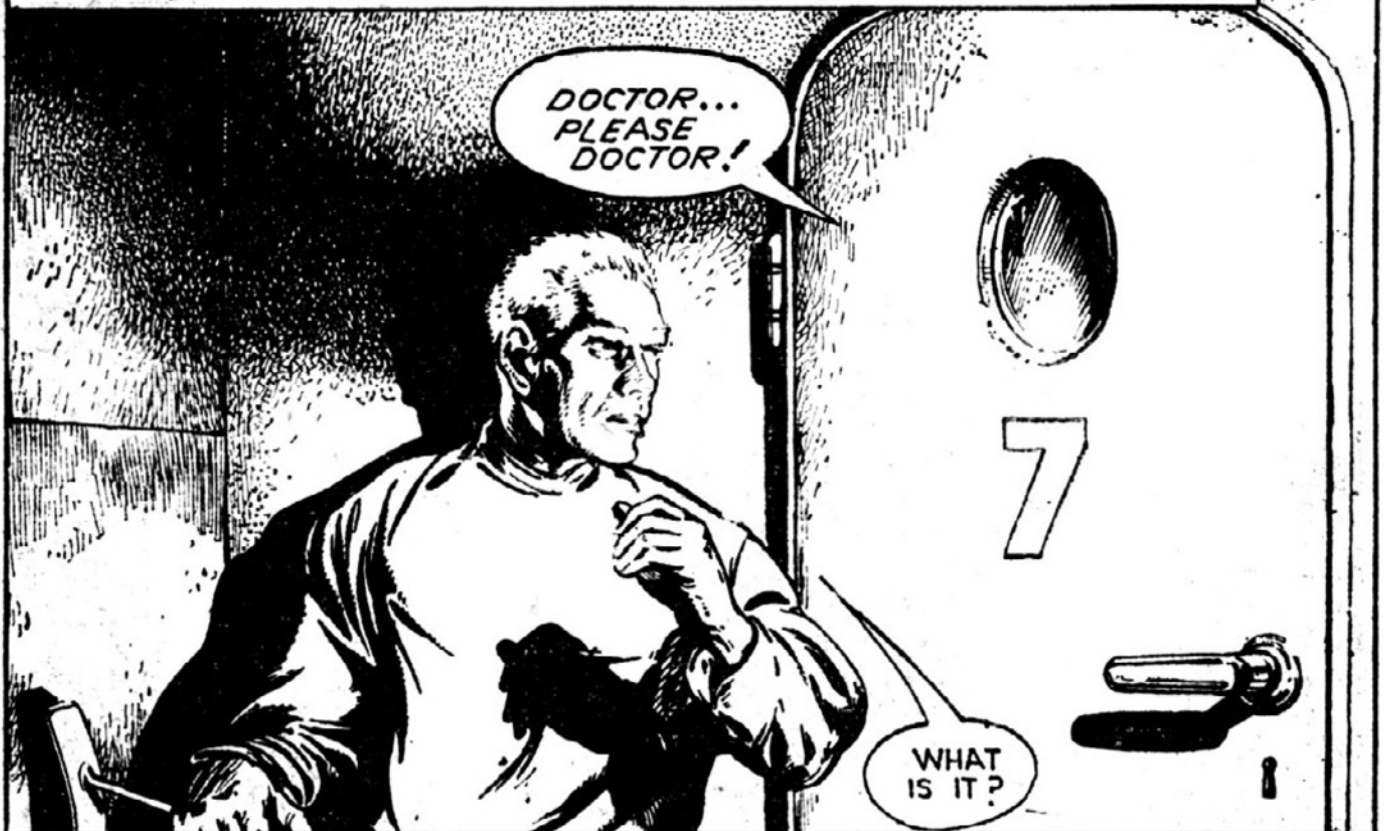


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EVEN NOW, THE YOUNG DOCTOR FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT THE JAPS WOULD SADISTICALLY ATTACK A SHIP THEY WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE IGNORED IF IT WAS FLYING THE RED CROSS. BUT HE KEPT SILENT ... AND SHARED THE WATCHES OUTSIDE THE LOCKED CABIN.



ON THE SECOND DAY AFTER THE RESCUE OF THE JAPS, WHEN DOCTOR SCOTT WAS AGAIN ON WATCH, A DESPAIRING CRY FROM THE CABIN ROUSED HIM.



A MAN WAS DYING BEHIND THAT LOCKED DOOR! THAT WAS WHAT THE URGENT VOICE SAID, AND THE DOCTOR STRAINED HIS EARS AS THOUGH TO DETECT WHETHER THERE WAS TRUTH IN THOSE PITIFUL WORDS.



TORN BY AN AGONY OF DOUBT, THE YOUNG MEDICO REMEMBERED THE OATH HE HAD GIVEN TO SERVE HUMANITY AND RELIEVE SUFFERING. HE KNEW WHAT HIS DECISION MUST BE!



WITH HIS GUN AT THE READY, THE YOUNG ENGLISHMAN UNLOCKED THE DOOR AND CAREFULLY OPENED IT... *BUT NOT CAREFULLY ENOUGH!* TWO WIRY HANDS REACHED UP AND GRABBED THE GUN... AND A CHAIR LEG FELL WITH A THUD ON THE DOCTOR'S UNPROTECTED HEAD...



**THE JAPS
WERE FREE!**

QUICKLY, YOU DOGS!
GET THE OTHER TWO
AND THE DUTCHMAN!



WHILE BELOW THE JAPS RACED LIKE VICIOUS YELLOW CATS ALONG THE COMPANIONWAYS, ON DECK HERB AND JACK WERE PEACEFULLY SMOKING AND DISCUSSING THE IDEALISTIC YOUNG DOCTOR...

THINK WE CAN RELY ON THE DOC DOWN BELOW, SARGE?

SURE! HE WON'T BE CAUGHT BY THOSE NIPS AGAIN!



THE BARE FEET MADE NO SOUND ON THE DECK. STEALTHILY THE FOUR JAP SAILORS CREPT UP ON THE UNSUSPECTING AUSTRALIANS. SUDDENLY, WITH A HOWL OF HATRED...

BANZAI!!

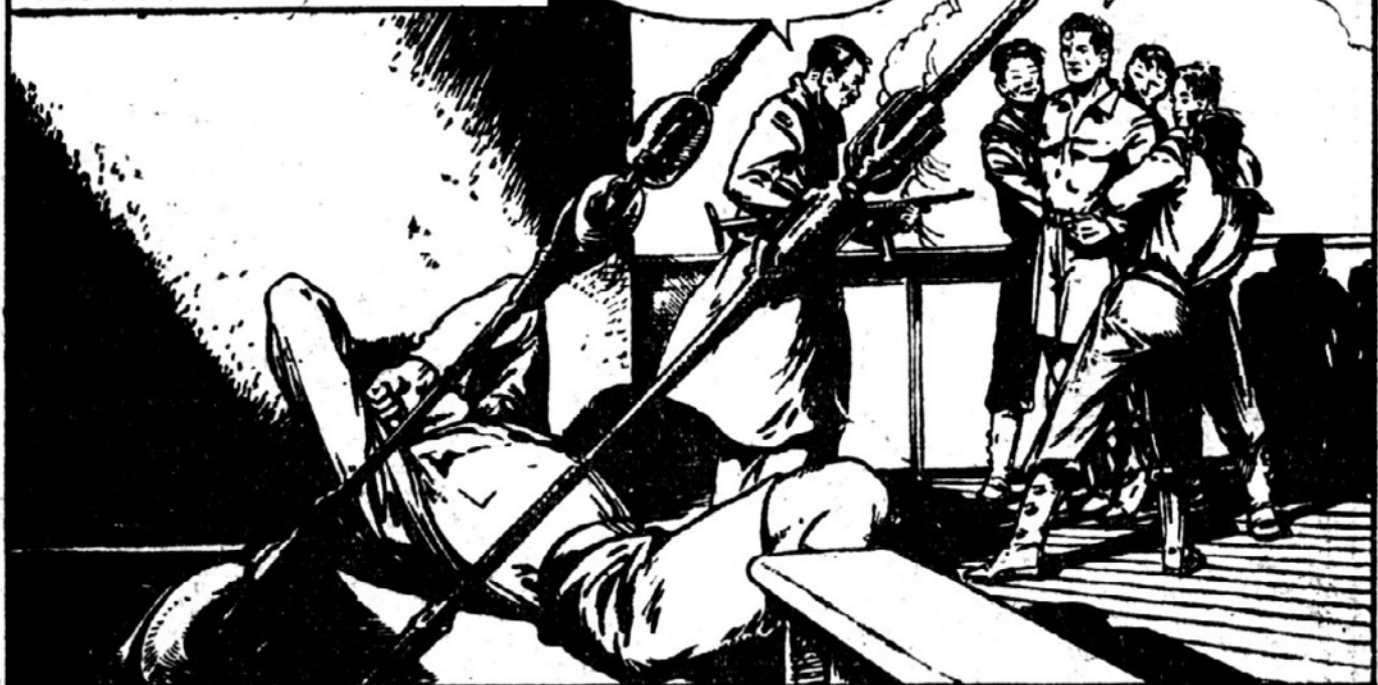
YOU YELLOW DEVILS!



HERB SAYERS WENT DOWN IN THAT FIRST RUSH, FELLED BY A VICIOUS BLOW ON THE HEAD FROM A LENGTH OF PIPING. JACK CARMODY FOUGHT FIERCELY, BUT EVEN HE COULD NOT FIGHT A GUN.

PLEASE TO GIVE IN! TAKE THEM BELOW TO JOIN THE TRUSTING ONE!

SO THE DOC GAVE THEM ANOTHER CHANCE ... *THE FOOL!*



WHILE THE TWO AUSSIES WERE HERDED BELOW DECKS, THE JAP CAPTAIN AND TWO MEN QUIETLY APPROACHED THE BRIDGE AND CAPTAIN VAN DOON.

ACH! SO!

AS YOU OBSERVE, SO! CAPTAIN, I SHALL SHARE THE BRIDGE WITH YOU... *BUT YOU WILL OBEY MY ORDERS!* NOW YOU WILL ALTER COURSE!



WITHIN FIVE MINUTES THE *BRUGES* HAD FALLEN INTO THE RUTHLESS HANDS OF THE JAPS. HELPLESSLY CAPTAIN VAN DOON ALTERED COURSE TO THE NORTH AND THE NEAREST JAP-OCCUPIED ISLANDS. AND BELOW DECK ...



WELL, DOC?

AS THE DOOR SLAMMED ON THE THREE DEFEATED MEN, THE DOCTOR LOOKED UP WHITE-FACED. THE TOUGH AUSTRALIAN STARED AT HIM DISPASSIONATELY.



I'M SORRY, SERGEANT. I TRUSTED THEM AGAIN. BUT THIS TIME I HAD TO...

I CAN GUESS, DOC! DON'T TAKE IT TO HEART! I RECKON I SHOULDN'T HAVE PUT YOU ON GUARD!

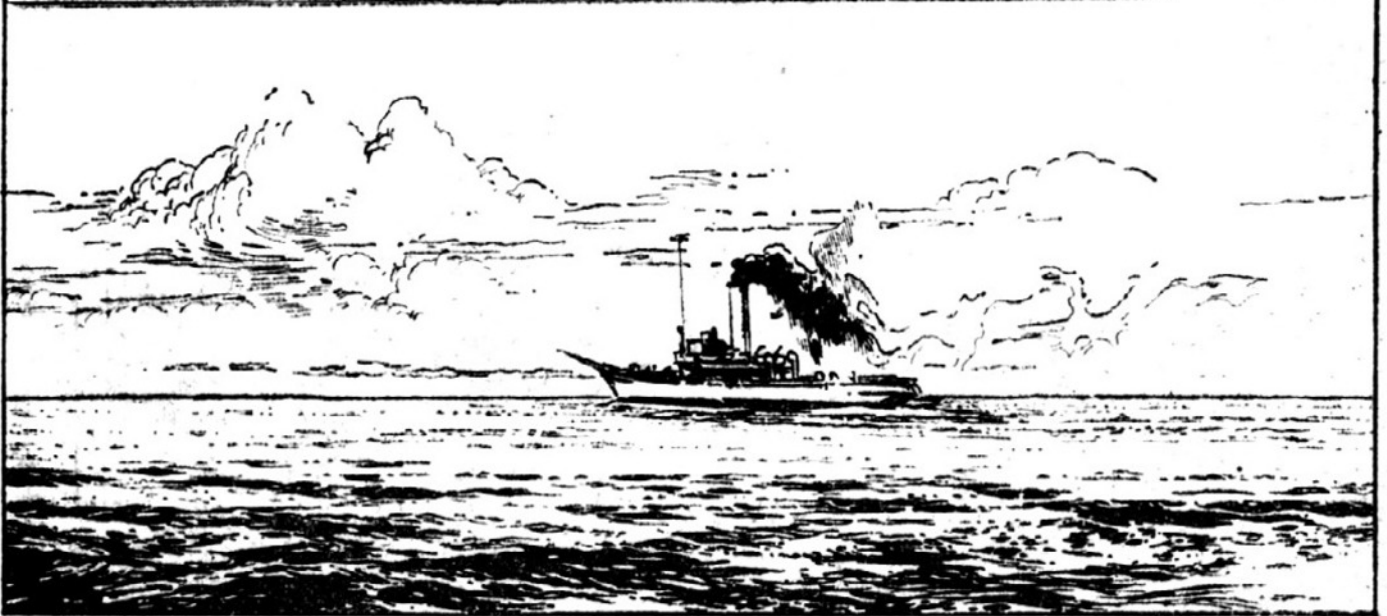


JACK CARMODY FELT NO ANGER. THE YOUNG ENGLISHMAN HAD HIS OWN BRAND OF COURAGE PROBABLY. BUT WAR WAS FOR THE RUTHLESS!

YOU'RE A DECENT MAN, DOC... TOO DECENT TO FIGHT A WAR WITH VERMIN LIKE THE JAPS! MIND, I'M NOT BLAMING YOU! WE'LL NEED YOUR SORT TO BUILD A PEACE WHEN THE FIGHTING'S OVER!

Chapter 3. TREACHERY REPAID

AS DARKNESS GATHERED BEHIND THE LOCKED CABIN DOOR, THE *BRIGES* HEADED TOWARDS THE JAPANESE-OCCUPIED ISLANDS IN THE NORTH. IT LOOKED AS THOUGH HER BRIEF BID FOR FREEDOM WAS OVER.



TWO DAYS PASSED, BITTER DAYS FOR THE THREE CAPTIVES. ON THE THIRD DAY, AS JACK GROWLED IRRITABLY AT HERB SAYERS BY THE PORTHOLE, THE BURLY QUEENSLANDER STIFFENED.



FOR A MOMENT, JACK CARMODY SAW NOTHING BUT THE HEAVING PACIFIC. THEN HIS EYES FOCUSED ON THE FAR HORIZON AND HIS MUSCLES TENSED. IT WAS A SHIP!



ON THE BRIDGE, KEEN BLACK EYES WATCHED THE APPROACHING SHIP. BINOCULARS SHOWED THE STARS AND STRIPES SNAPPING FROM ITS PEAK. THE JAP'S VOICE WAS AS SOFT AS DEATH.

AN AMERICAN DESTROYER, SO! NOW YOU MUST BE VERY SMART, CAPTAIN. OR MY MEN WILL SHOOT YOU DOWN LIKE A DOG! LISTEN CAREFULLY!

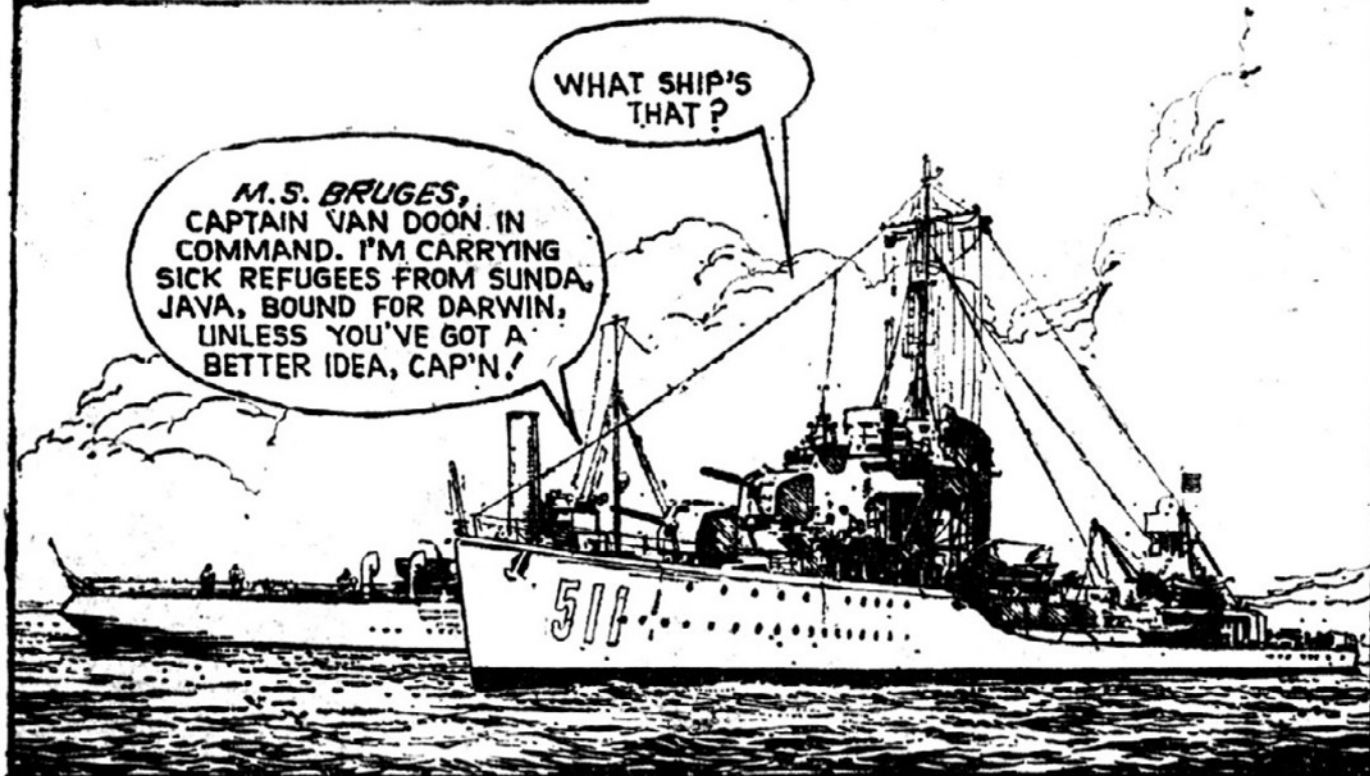


THE AMERICAN DESTROYER CLOSED FAST. FROM HER BRIDGE, THE OFFICERS STARED CURIOUSLY AT THE SMART WHITE HULL OF THE LITTLE SHIP. SHE SEEMED INNOCENT ENOUGH...

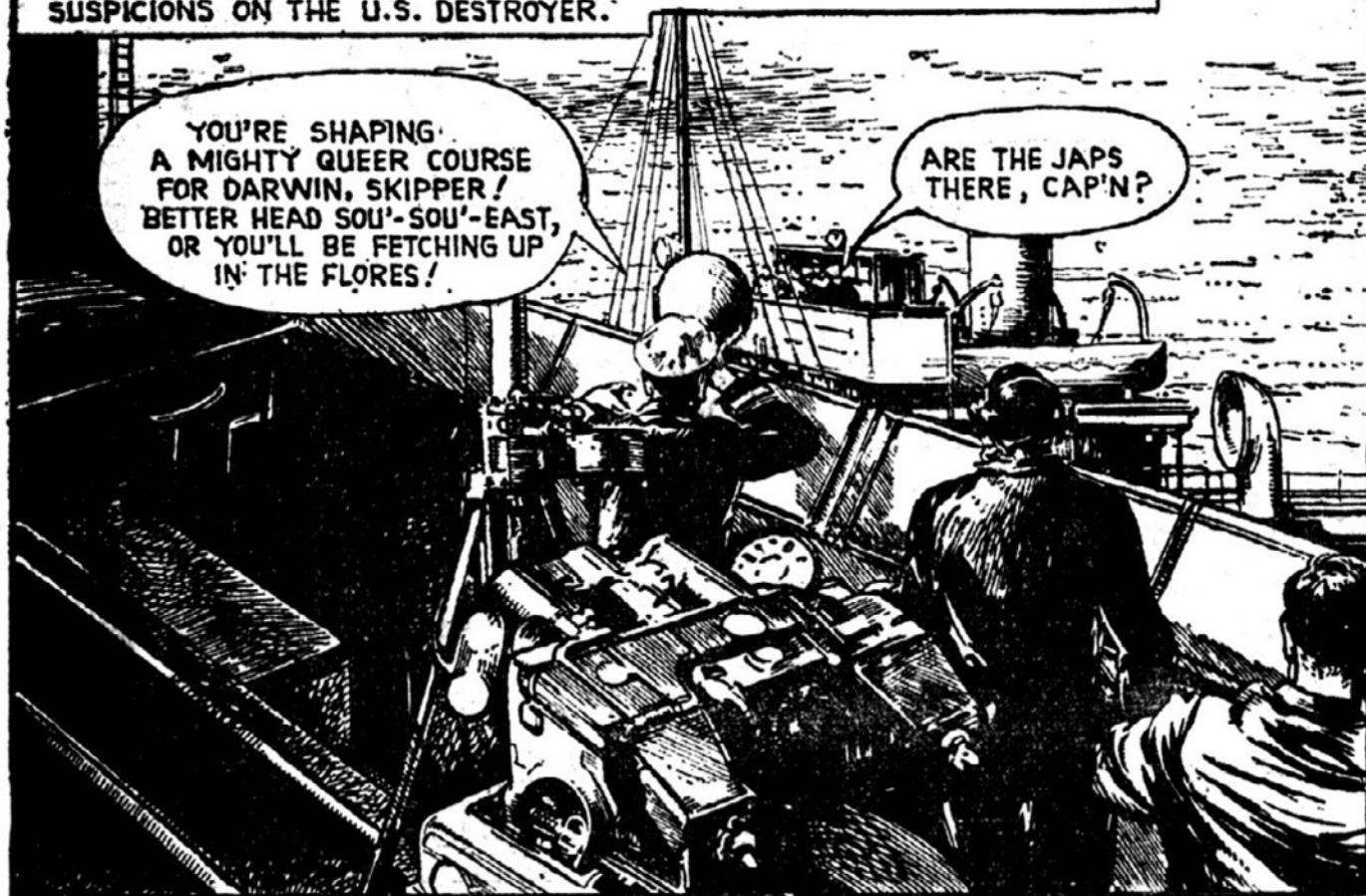
LOOKS LIKE A LUXURY CRUISER. MAYBE SHE'S CARRYING REFUGEES... LET'S HAVE A LOOK-SEE!



THE DESTROYER SWUNG BROADSIDE ON, ONE HUNDRED YARDS AWAY. THE CHEERFUL AMERICAN VOICE HAILED THE *BRUGES*... AND A DUTCH VOICE CAREFULLY ANSWERED.



THE DUTCHMAN'S VOICE WAS STIFF AND UNNATURAL, BUT IT AROUSED NO SUSPICIONS ON THE U.S. DESTROYER.



THE AMERICAN SKIPPER WAS IN A CHEERFUL MOOD, AND GLAD TO BE ABLE TO GIVE SOME GOOD NEWS TO AN ALLY. GOOD NEWS FOR THE ALLIES IN THE PACIFIC IN THE DARK DAYS OF 1942 WAS ALL TOO RARE!

RIGHT NOW THEY ARE, YEAH! BUT THERE'S A UNITED STATES TASK FORCE RIGHT BEHIND ME THAT HAS IDEAS ABOUT THAT! BETWEEN YOU AND ME, SKIPPER, THE JAPS IN THOSE ISLANDS ARE GOING TO BE BLOWN FROM HERE TO TOKYO INSIDE FORTY EIGHT HOURS. WAAL, SO LONG ... AND GOOD LUCK!

SO! SO!



HIDDEN FROM THE AMERICAN'S EYES, THE TREACHEROUS ENEMY LISTENED TO THE UNGUARDED VOICE WITH AN EVIL SMILE. THE THREE MEN IN THE LOCKED CABIN WATCHED THE AMERICAN WARSHIP SLIDE AWAY WITH SINKING HEARTS...

DARN IT, SHE'S GOING! THAT JAP DEVIL MUST HAVE FOOLED THE YANKS! IF ONLY WE COULD DO SOMETHING!



SUDDENLY THE DOOR BURST OPEN...

THE CAPTAIN WISHES
TO RECEIVE HEALING FROM
THE DOCTOR! YOU ARE TO
COME WITH ME!

GO ON, DOC, DO AS HE SAYS!
AND WATCH POINTS...
GET ME?



ONE GLANCE AT THE AUSTRALIAN'S GRIM FACE
AND THE YOUNG DOCTOR KNEW WHAT HE
HAD TO DO. THIS WAS THE SLENDER CHANCE
THE CAPTIVES HAD BEEN PRAYING FOR.

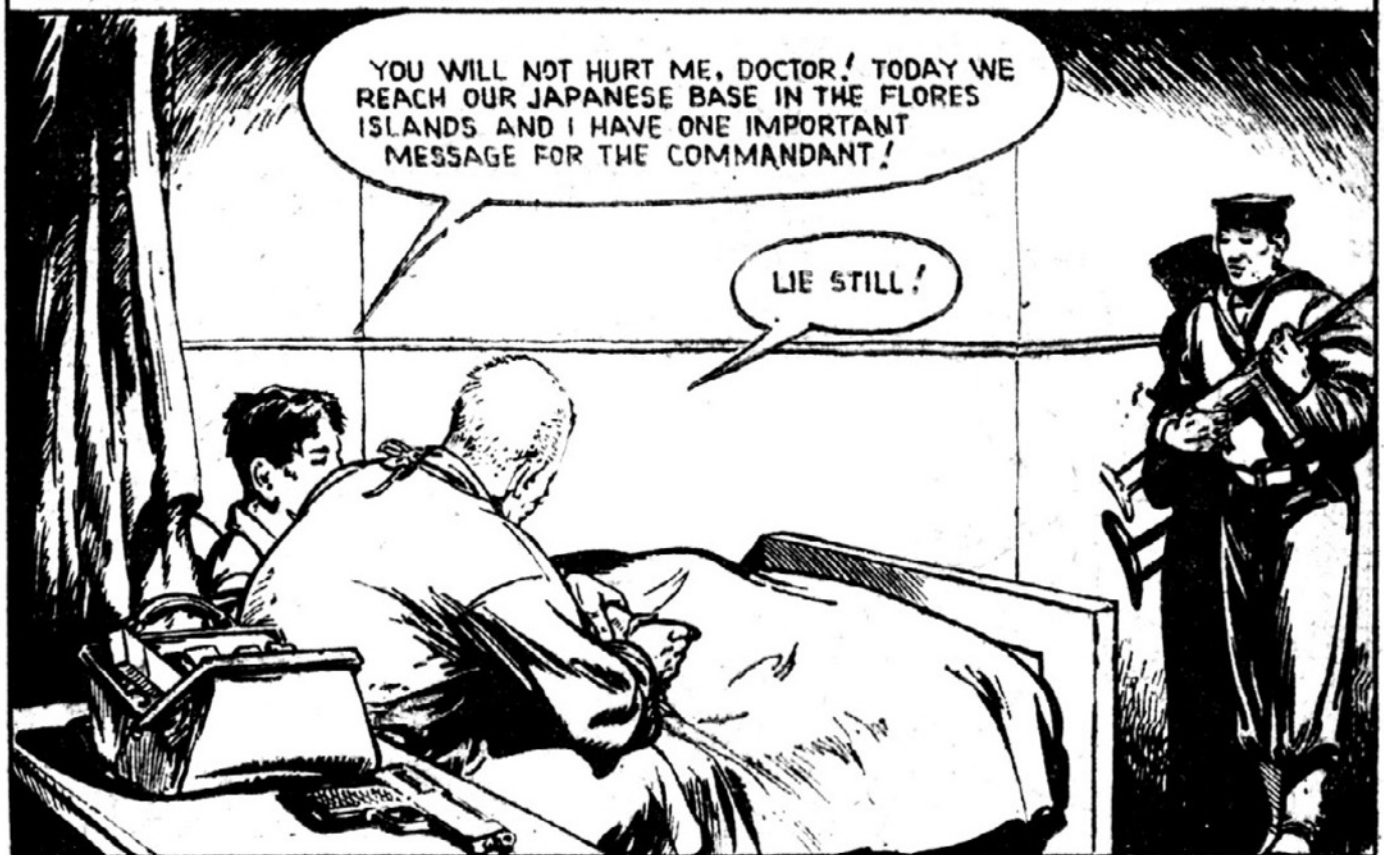
I GET YOU,
SERGEANT!



SOMEHOW, DURING HIS BRIEF VISIT TO THE CAPTAIN, THE DOCTOR MUST TURN THE TABLES ON THE JAPS. HIS MIND WORKING FURIOUSLY, HE WALKED BEFORE THE GUARD TO THE STATE CABIN.



THE SLANT EYES WATCHED HIM LAZILY AS HE CROSSED THE CABIN. OBVIOUSLY THE CAPTAIN HAD NO FEAR OF HIM. SO MUCH THE BETTER... THAT PISTOL WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN LEFT ON THE TABLE BESIDE THE BUNK IF THE JAP HAD BEEN CAUTIOUS.



THE JAP'S VOICE WAS RELAXED AND SMUG ...

THE AMERICANS TALK TOO MUCH, DOCTOR, BUT I MAY TALK TO YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE MY PRISONER! SO I TELL YOU THAT IN FORTY EIGHT HOURS AN AMERICAN TASK FORCE INTENDS TO ATTACK MY PEOPLE IN THE FLORES ... ONLY I SHALL BE ABLE TO WARN THEM FIRST AND THE BOOT WILL BE - HOW DO YOU SAY - ON THE OTHER FOOT!

HIS MIND RECORDING THAT UNGUARDED SPEECH, HIS FACE CALM AND INNOCENT, THE YOUNG DOCTOR RAISED THE SYRINGE. FOR AN INSTANT, THE JAP'S EYES NARROWED...

WHAT IS THAT YOU DO, DOCTOR?

JUST A SHOT TO EASE THE PAIN WHILE I WORK ON YOUR ARM, CAPTAIN! YOU TRUST ME, DON'T YOU?



THEN HE LOOKED AT THE DOCTOR'S
BLANK FACE AND SMILED
CONTEMPTUOUSLY.

I TRUST YOU,
DOCTOR. YOU ARE A
POOR GOOD MAN!



BUT IT WAS MORPHIA WHICH SLID INTO THE
JAP CAPTAIN'S VEINS... MORPHIA TO INDUCE
OBLIVION WHILE THE DOCTOR'S STEADY
HAND REACHED BEHIND THE BAG HE HAD
PLACED SO CAREFULLY ON THE TABLE...



COOLLY DOCTOR SCOTT WAITED, THE GUN CRADLED IN HIS HAND. HE HEARD THE CAPTAIN'S
SIGHING BREATH AS THE MORPHIA TOOK EFFECT, HE HEARD THE CLICK OF THE GUARD'S
MACHINE PISTOL AS IT CAME UP...

MY CAPTAIN SLEEPS!
YOU SHALL PAY FOR THIS,
PIG OF A DOCTOR!



AT THE RATTLE OF THE BOLT, THE YOUNG DOCTOR WHEELED LIKE A STRIKING COBRA... AND FIRED!

AAGH!



THE JAP SAILOR LURCHED AS THE BULLET HIT HIM, CLAWED AIR AND SPRAWLED. THE DOCTOR SPRANG ACROSS THE CABIN AND REACHED FOR THE PRECIOUS WEAPON.

IT WAS ME OR YOU!



OUTSIDE THE DOOR HE MOVED SWIFTLY ALONG THE COMPANIONWAY TOWARDS THE LOCKED CABIN AND THE SECOND GUARD. FOR ONE BRIEF MOMENT HE PAUSED, HEART POUNDING.

NOW FOR THE NEXT ONE!



THEN HE SLIPPED QUIETLY ROUND THE CORNER AND BEGAN TO RUN. COOLLY HE JUDGED THE SLOW BUT MURDEROUS REACTIONS OF THE GUARD...



THE DOCTOR WAS NO KILLER, BUT THESE FANATICAL JAPS GAVE HIM NO CHOICE. THE GUARD FIRED FIRST AND THE BULLETS WHISTLED PAST THE DOCTOR'S HEAD AS HE PULLED THE TRIGGER.



HIS HANDS COLD AND STEADY, THE YOUNG DOCTOR WRENCHED THE KEY FROM THE SPRAWLING GUARD AND KICKED HIS GUN AWAY FROM HIM.

ALL RIGHT, SERGEANT!
I MADE IT!



NOW THAT HE WAS COMMITTED TO ACTION, THE ENGLISHMAN WASTED NO TIME ON TALK.

NICE GOING,
DOC!

WE'LL TALK LATER,
SERGEANT! WE'VE GOT
TO GET ON DECK BEFORE
THE ALARM IS RAISED.



WRENCHING THE AMMUNITION BELT FROM THE JAP, THE THREE MEN RAN HEADLONG TOWARDS THE OPEN DECK ...

I PUT THE
CAPTAIN OUT COLD...
BUT NOT BEFORE
HE BLABBED HIS
PLANS! WE'VE
GOT TO GET
CONTROL OF THE
BRIDGE!

OKAY BY ME,
DOC!



BUT ALREADY THE TWO SHOTS BELOW DECK HAD ROUSED THE JAPS. THEY CAME RUNNING, THEIR YELLOW FACES UGLY WITH RAGE AND FEAR

QUICK, THEY MUST NOT REACH THE DECK ALIVE!



AS THE DOOR FLEW OPEN AFT ALONG THE DECK, THE JAPS' GUNS SWUNG UP AND DEATH STARED THE COMRADES IN THE FACE...



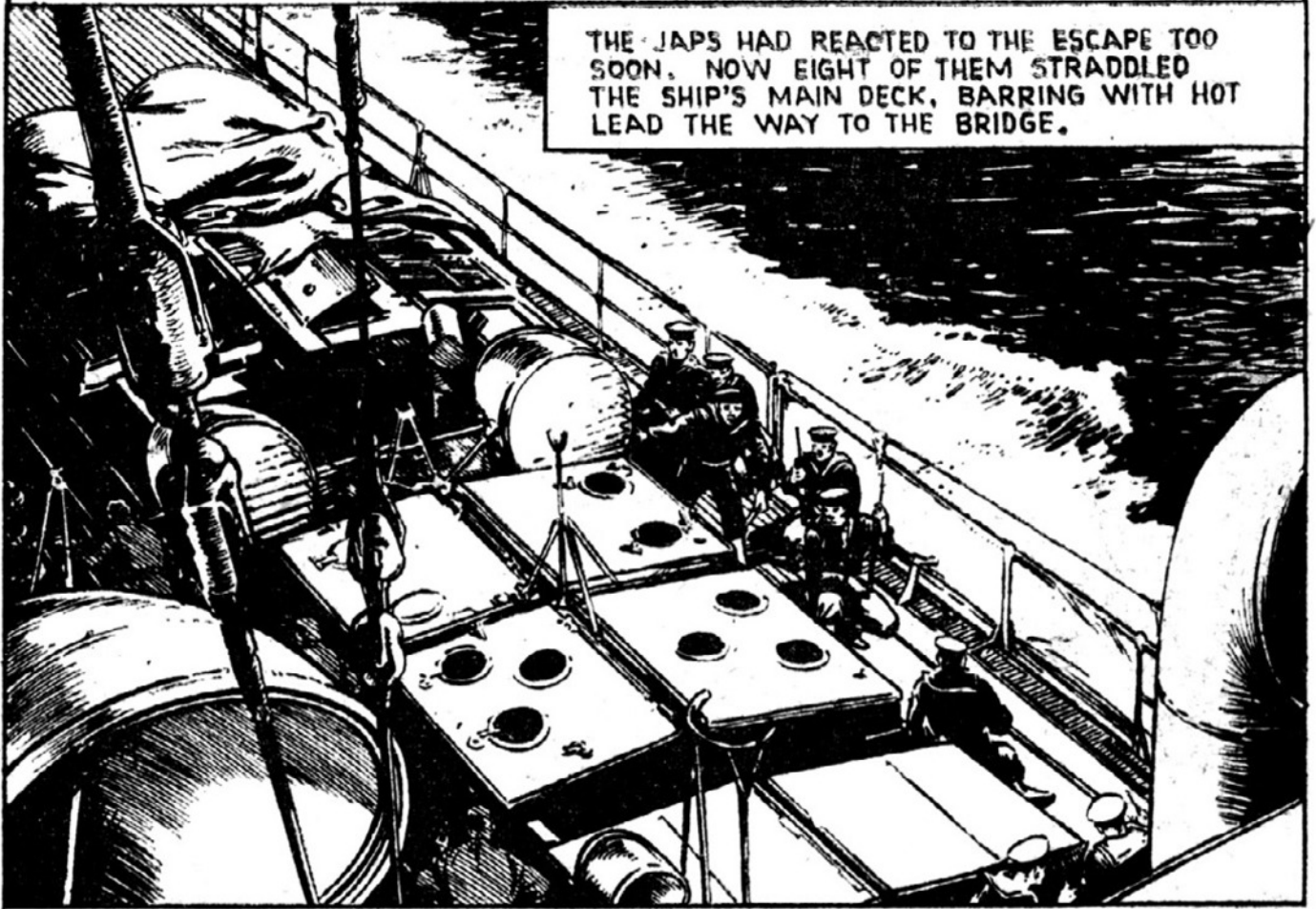
BUT THE JAPS' AIM WAS WILD. DROPPING COOLLY TO ONE KNEE, THE TOUGH AUSTRALIAN COVERED HIS TWO COMPANIONS WITH A SAVAGE BURST OF FIRE.



AS HERB SAYERS CALLED BEHIND HIM, JACK CARMODY INCHED SLOWLY BACKWARD, FIRING VICIOUSLY AT EVERY JAP WHO EXPOSED HIMSELF ON THE NARROW DECK...



Chapter 4. A DEFENCELESS TARGET



THE JAPS HAD REACTED TO THE ESCAPE TOO SOON. NOW EIGHT OF THEM STRADDLED THE SHIP'S MAIN DECK, BARRING WITH HOT LEAD THE WAY TO THE BRIDGE.

PINNED TO THE AFTER DECK PLATFORM, JACK CARMODY AND HIS TWO COMPANIONS CROUCHED BELOW FLYING BULLETS TO HOLD A COUNCIL OF WAR.

THE AMERICAN CAPTAIN MUST HAVE TALKED! THE JAPS KNOW THERE'S A U.S. TASK FORCE ATTACKING THE FLORES WITHIN FORTY EIGHT HOURS... AND WE'RE DUE THERE TODAY! IF WE DON'T STOP THIS SHIP, THE JAPS WILL GIVE THE WARNING AND THE TASK FORCE WILL BE CAUGHT UNAWARES AND MASSACRED!



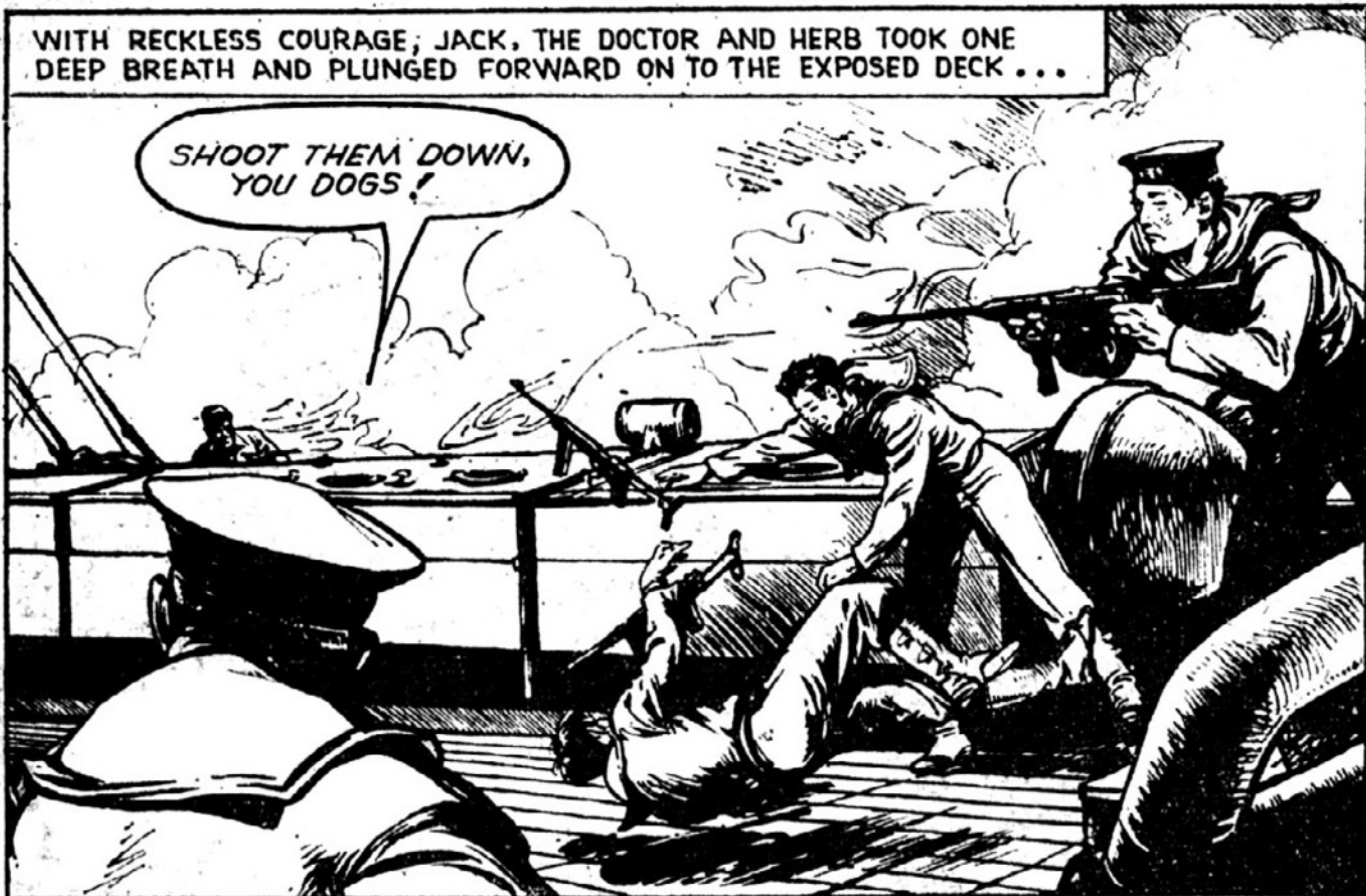
URGENTLY THE DOCTOR OUTLINED THE JAP CAPTAIN'S PLAN. THE SAFETY OF THE GREAT AMERICAN TASK FORCE DEPENDED ON THREE DESPERATE MEN.

RIGHT, COBBERS, WE'LL GIVE IT A GO! SPREAD OUT AND AIM LOW!

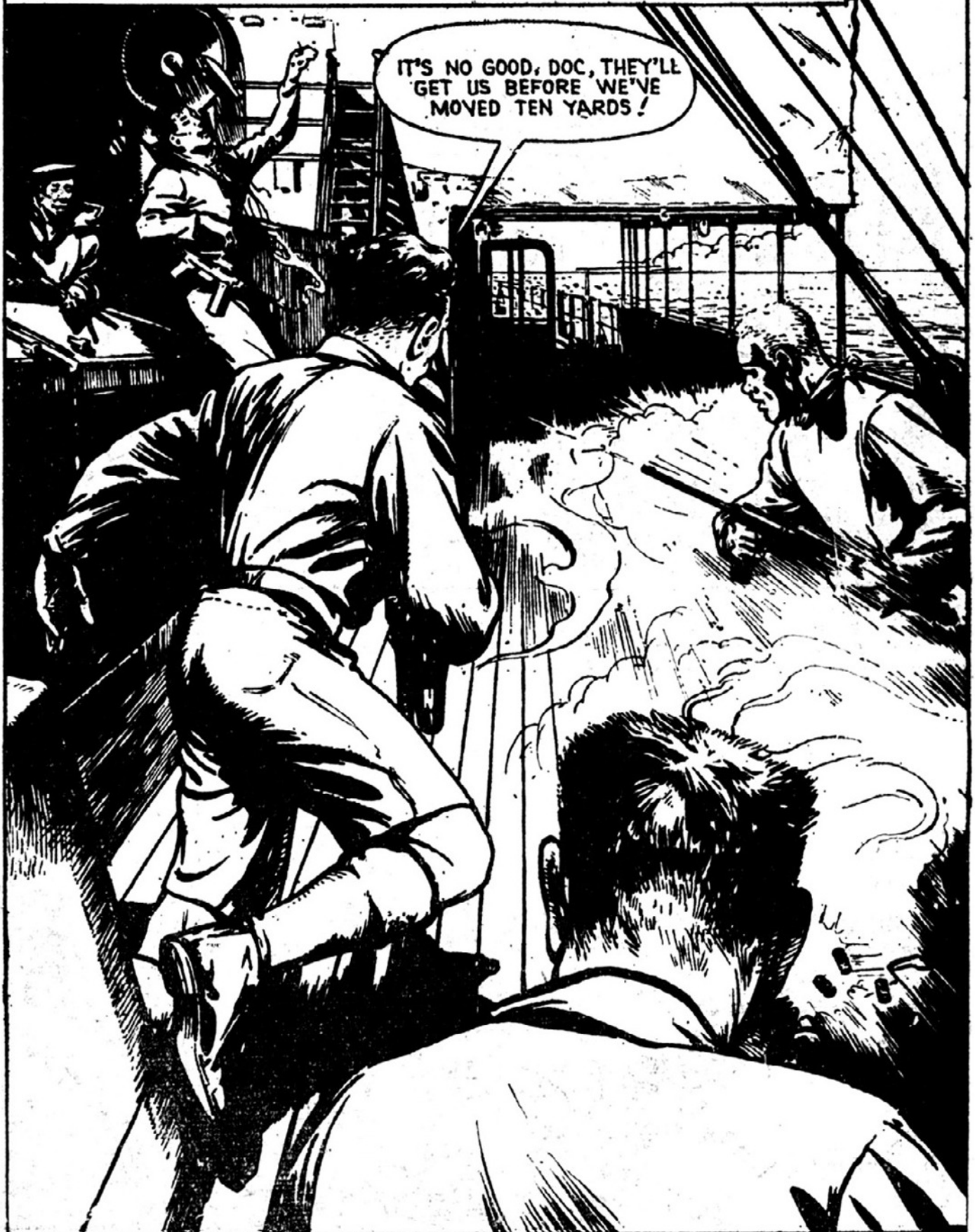


WITH RECKLESS COURAGE, JACK, THE DOCTOR AND HERB TOOK ONE DEEP BREATH AND PLUNGED FORWARD ON TO THE EXPOSED DECK...

SHOOT THEM DOWN, YOU DOGS!



THE JAPS WERE WELL ENTRENCHED, AND THEY WERE EIGHT AGAINST THREE. A STORM OF LEAD SWEEP THE DECK VICIOUSLY AND THE TOUGH AUSTRALIAN TWISTED WITH PAIN AS A BULLET HIT HIM.



IN THE FACE OF THAT MURDEROUS FIRE, ONLY RETREAT WAS POSSIBLE. THE DOCTOR, STILL FIRING, STUBBORNLY, WAS THE LAST TO REACH THE SHELTER OF THE PLATFORM.



WE'VE GOT TO GET TO THAT BRIDGE!

YEAH, DOC, BUT THIS WAY THEY'LL CARRY US THERE — DEAD!

THE AUSSIE SERGEANT, MOMENTARILY BEATEN, GRIPPED HIS WOUNDED ARM AND SAGGED WITH PAIN. QUICKLY THE DOCTOR CROUCHED OVER HIM.

SHUT UP, SERGEANT. WE'LL WORRY ABOUT OUR POSITION LATER. RIGHT NOW I'M GOING TO DRESS THIS ARM OF YOURS. NOW, WHAT DO I DO FOR A BANDAGE ...



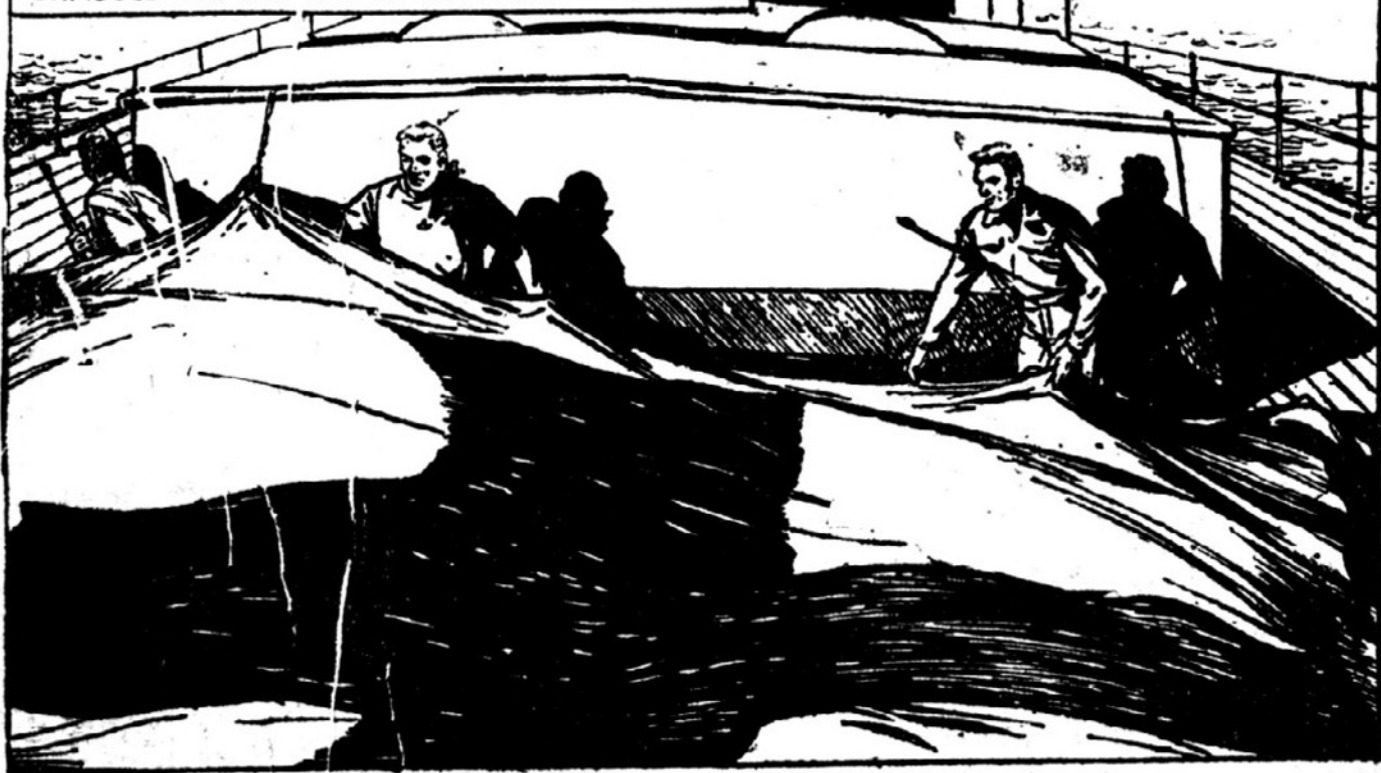
LOOKING 'ROUND FOR A SCRAP OF CLOTH TO MAKE A BANDAGE, THE YOUNG DOCTOR'S EYES FELL ON A HEAP OF CANVAS IN ONE CORNER OF THE PLATFORM.



IT WAS THE RED CROSS BANNER WHICH THE IMPROVISED HOSPITAL SHIP HAD FLAUNTED ... AND A SUDDEN IDEA FLASHED INTO THE DOCTOR'S MIND.



QUICKLY, WITH AN IRONIC GRIN WHICH MYSTIFIED THE TWO AUSTRALIANS, THE YOUNG ENGLISHMAN DRAGGED THE CANVAS TO THE RAIL.



UNFOLDED BY THE STRONG WIND, THE CANVAS WHIPPED OUT OVER THE DECK, BARING ITS GIANT RED CROSS TO THE SKY.

YOU'RE STILL NOT THINKING THAT RED CROSS IS GOING TO STOP THE JAPS ATTACKING US, ARE YOU, DOC?

THAT'S JUST WHAT I'M NOT THINKING, SERGEANT!



THE TOUGH AUSTRALIAN HAD WATCHED THE DOCTOR'S ACTIONS WITH A DEEPENING FROWN ON HIS TANNED FACE. BUT THE YOUNG MEDICO HAD HIS ANSWER.

YOU'VE TAUGHT ME THAT LESSON, SERGEANT, AND I'VE LEARNED IT WELL! I'VE PUT THAT RED CROSS OUT BECAUSE I THINK IT WILL MAKE ANY JAP AIRCRAFT WHO SEES IT ATTACK US AND SINK US! AND THAT'S THE ONLY WAY I KNOW OF STOPPING THESE JAPS ABOARD FROM REACHING THEIR COMRADES AND GIVING THE WARNING!



THE RED CROSS WAS A BAIT FOR THE VICIOUS JAP AIR FORCE. AND THE DOCTOR WAS PREPARED TO SACRIFICE THE SHIP AND ALL ABOARD HER TO SAVE THE TASK FORCE FOR ITS DEADLY WORK.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR PATIENTS DOWN THERE, DOC?

I KNOW, SERGEANT! BUT THERE ARE ONLY THIRTY OF THEM, AND HOW MANY AMERICANS ARE SAILING IN THAT TASK FORCE OUT THERE? TEN THOUSAND? ARE WE TO LET THEM DIE?

LOOK, COBBERS, LAND!



NOW THAT THE JUNGLE-COVERED SLOPES OF THE FLORES ISLANDS WERE IN SIGHT, THE JAPS ON THE BRIDGE BEGAN TO PANIC WITH EXCITEMENT...

MORE SPEED, DUTCH PIG! YOU, GO BELOW AND TRY TO ROUSE OUR CAPTAIN AGAIN!



BUT THOUGH THE LITTLE SHIP WAS SO NEAR TO THE JAP NAVAL BASE, NO AIRCRAFT DRONED IN THE MOCKINGLY EMPTY SKY!



I RECKON THERE'S NOT MUCH TIME LEFT!

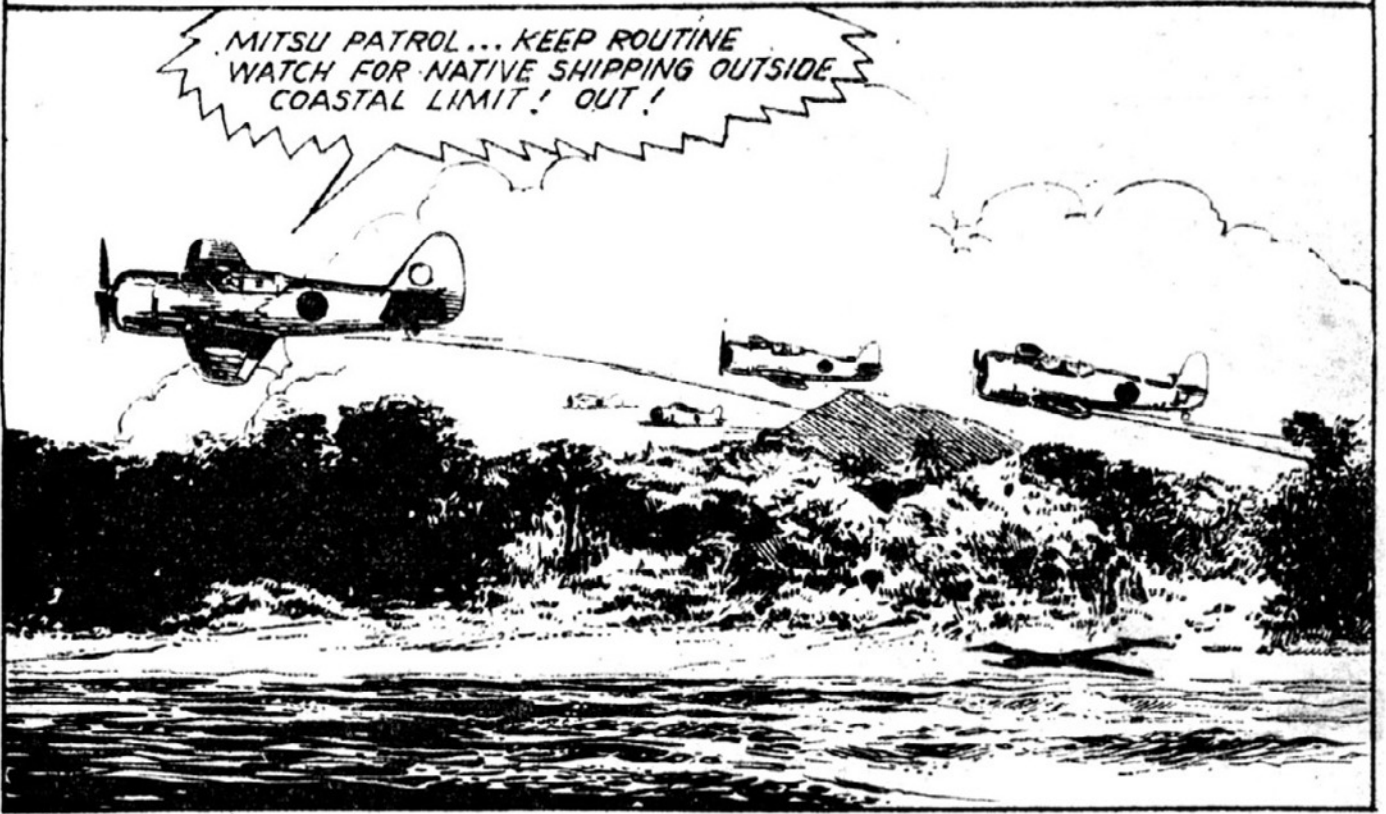
COME ON, YOU MURDEROUS JAPS, WHERE ARE YOU?

NEARER AND NEARER TO THE LAND CREPT THE SMALL SHIP. AND ON HER AFTER DECK, THREE DESPERATE MEN PRAYED FOR ENEMY PLANES TO ATTACK THEM!



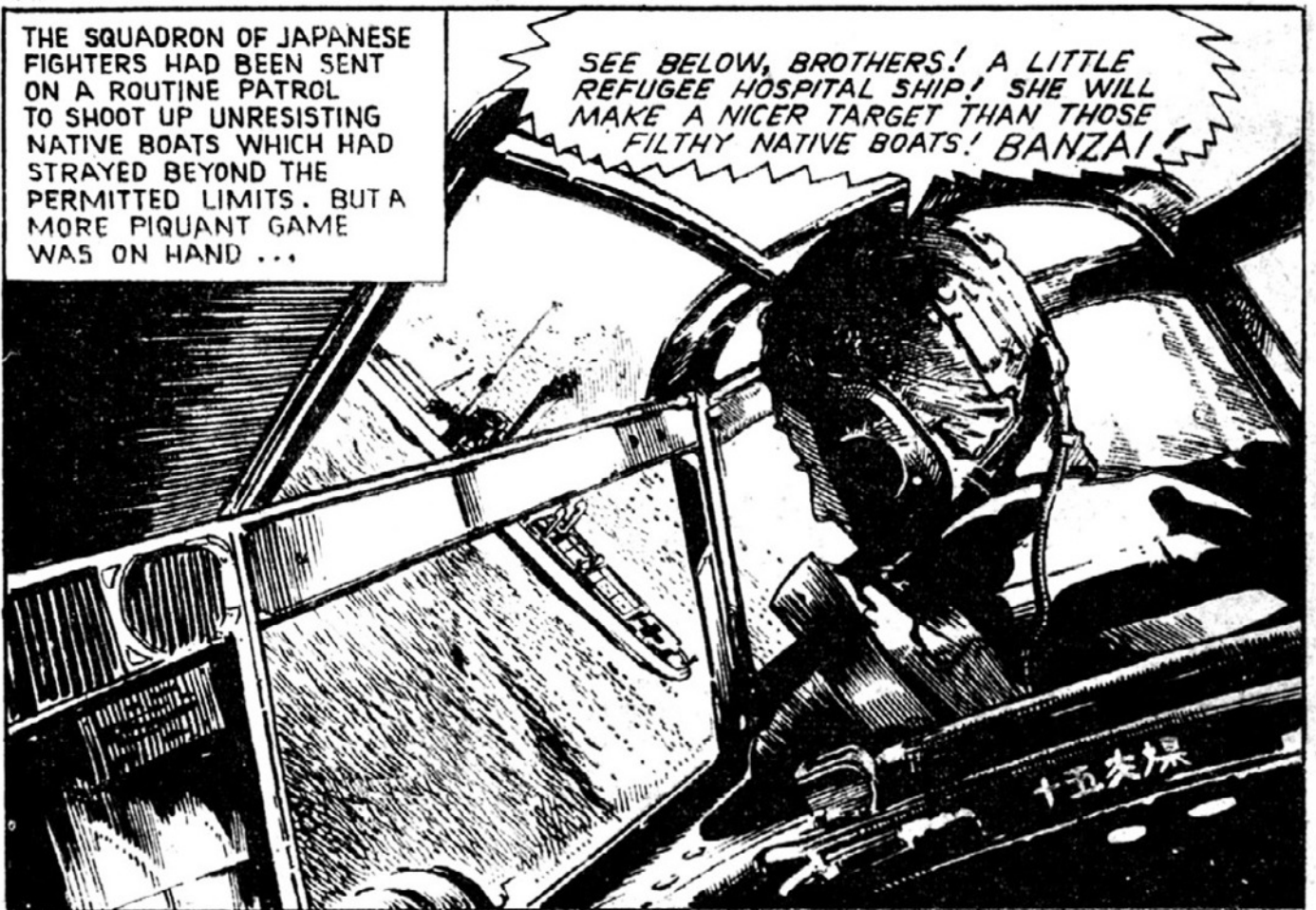
AT THAT MOMENT, ABOVE THE LONG ROAR OF THE PACIFIC ON THE DISTANT SANDY BEACH, ROSE THE SHATTERING ANTHEM OF HIGH POWERED AIRCRAFT ENGINES ...

MITSU PATROL... KEEP ROUTINE
WATCH FOR NATIVE SHIPPING OUTSIDE
COASTAL LIMIT! OUT!



THE SQUADRON OF JAPANESE
FIGHTERS HAD BEEN SENT
ON A ROUTINE PATROL
TO SHOOT UP UNRESISTING
NATIVE BOATS WHICH HAD
STRAYED BEYOND THE
PERMITTED LIMITS. BUT A
MORE PIQUANT GAME
WAS ON HAND ...

SEE BELOW, BROTHERS! A LITTLE
REFUGEE HOSPITAL SHIP! SHE WILL
MAKE A NICER TARGET THAN THOSE
FILTHY NATIVE BOATS! BANZAI!



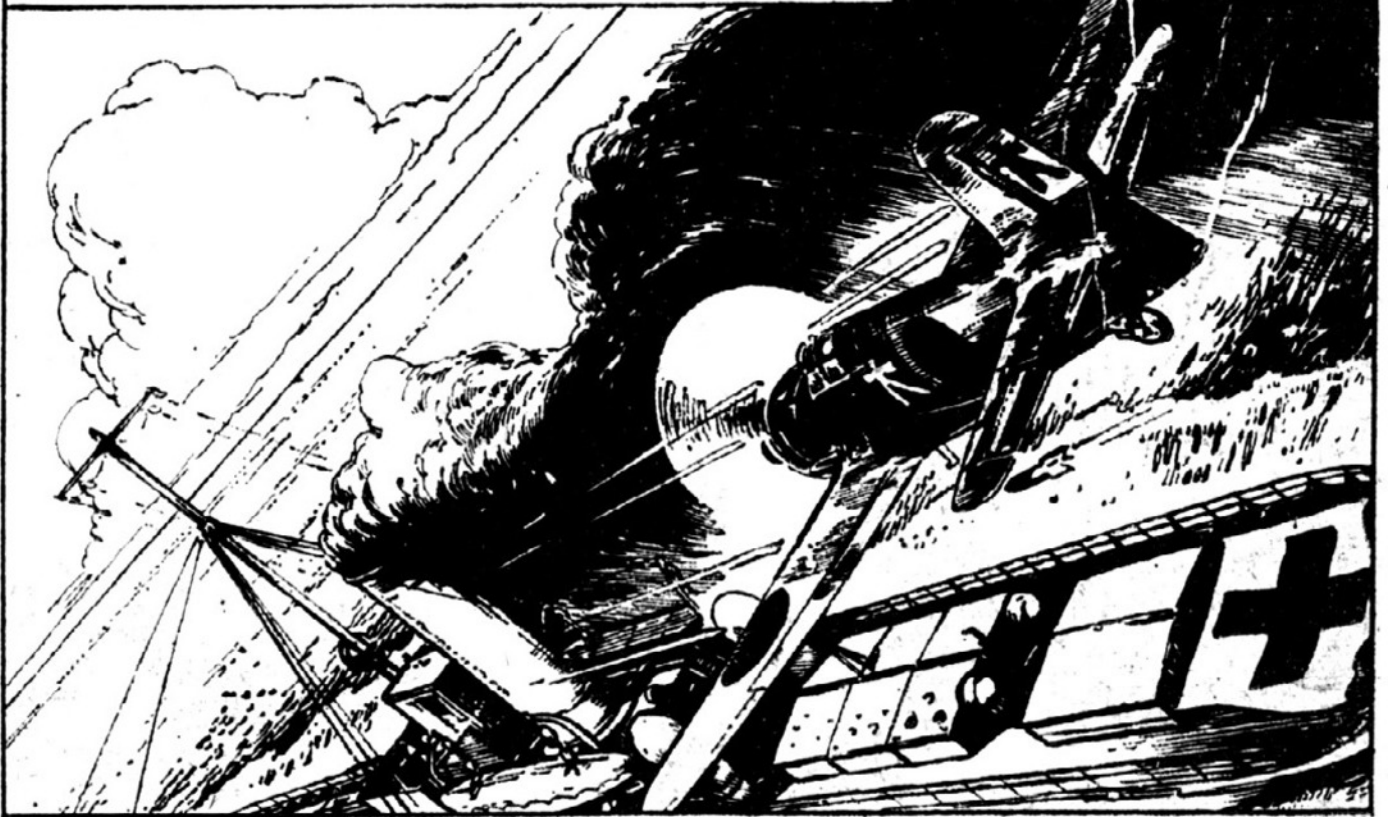
IF THAT JAP SQUADRON HAD CARRIED OUT ITS NORMAL PATROL IT WOULD HAVE SPOTTED A GREAT FLEET BEYOND THE FAR HORIZON. BUT IT DID NOT. WITH ALL ITS VICIOUS COMBINED STRIKING POWER, IT ROARED SAVAGELY DOWN ON ONE SMALL DEFENCELESS BOAT...



BONZER, DOC!
THAT RED CROSS
WORKED!

YES, SERGEANT,
IT WORKED! AND
THAT COMPLETES MY
EDUCATION IN THE
JAPANESE CHARACTER!

THE YOUNG DOCTOR WATCHED BITTERLY AS THE BLAZING JAP GUNS HAMMERED GAPING HOLES IN THE FAITH AND TRUST HE HAD ONCE POSSESSED...



AS THE SECOND JAP BOMBER ROARED MERCILESSLY DOWN, A BLEAR-EYED AND RAVING FIGURE TURNED A FACE DISTORTED BY RAGE TO THE SKY... IT WAS THE JAP CAPTAIN!

FOOLS! YOU WILL MURDER ME
AND I HAVE COME TO WARN YOU!
ACCURSED FOOLS!



THE ROAR OF A ZERO'S MOTOR FILLED THE SKY AND ITS BOMB HURTLED ON TO THE DECK OF THE *BRUGES*. THE TREACHEROUS JAPANESE CAPTAIN HAD BEEN PAID IN HIS OWN VILLAINOUS COIN... AND NOW THE ATTACKING BOMBERS HAD GIVEN THE THREE MEN A FIGHTING CHANCE.

NOW, COBBERS,
RUSH THEM!



THE DOCTOR AND THE TWO AUSSIES SEIZED THAT CHANCE WITH A WILD RUSH ALONG THE SHATTERED DECK. THE BOMB HAD CRUSHED THE JAPS' RESISTANCE.

GET TO THE BRIDGE!
THERE'S STILL A CHANCE
WE CAN SAVE THIS
HOOKER!



SO INTENT HAD THE JAP PILOTS BEEN ON THEIR COWARDLY ATTACK THAT THEY WERE CAUGHT UNAWARES BY A FLIGHT OF CARRIER-BASED AMERICAN FIGHTERS. PANIC-STRICKEN, THE JAPS SCATTERED.



A HAIL OF LEAD SWEEPED TWO JAP PLANES OUT OF THE SKY IN THAT FIRST DIVING ATTACK. AND BELOW ON THE SHIP'S DECK, ANOTHER ATTACK WAS SWEEPING ALL BEFORE IT.



NOW THE ONCE PROUD AND CRUEL JAP WAS A BLUBBERING COWARD APPEALING FOR THE MERCY HE HAD NEVER SHOWN TO HIS OWN VICTIMS. AND AS THE AUSSIES REACHED THE BRIDGE...



AT LAST THE *M.S. BRUGES* WAS IN ITS RIGHTFUL HANDS AGAIN, AND STEERING ON ITS TRUE COURSE!



ALTER COURSE DUE SOUTH, HELMSMAN! WELL, SERGEANT, THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME BACK MY SHIP!

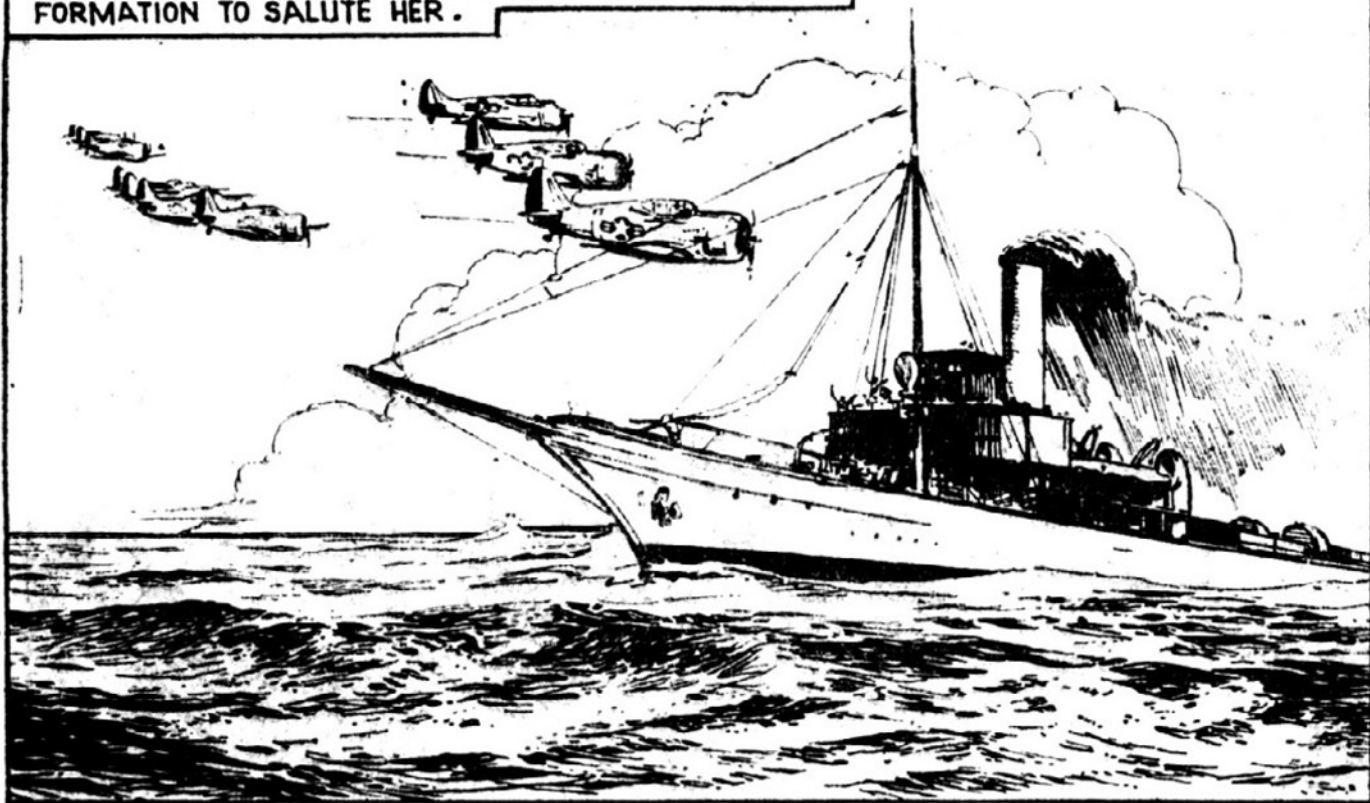
DON'T THANK ME, CAPTAIN! IT WAS THE DOC WHO WORKED THIS LITTLE MIRACLE!

THE TASK OF THE AMERICAN FIGHTERS FROM THE DISTANT CARRIER HAD BEEN TO PIN DOWN THE ENEMY AIRCRAFT BEFORE THE TASK FORCE ATTACKED. AND THEY HAD DONE IT BRILLIANTLY... THANKS TO THE HOSPITAL SHIP.



NICE WORK, BOYS!
WE OUGHT TO THANK THAT TOY YACHT DOWN THERE FOR KEEPING THE JAPS OCCUPIED WHILE WE ATTACKED! THOUGH WHY THEY'RE SHOWING THAT RED CROSS BEATS ME... THEY MIGHT HAVE KNOWN IT WOULD ATTRACT THE JAPS!

AS THE GAME LITTLE SHIP TURNED TO HEAD SEAWARD,
THE AMERICAN SQUADRON ROARED DOWN IN TIGHT
FORMATION TO SALUTE HER.



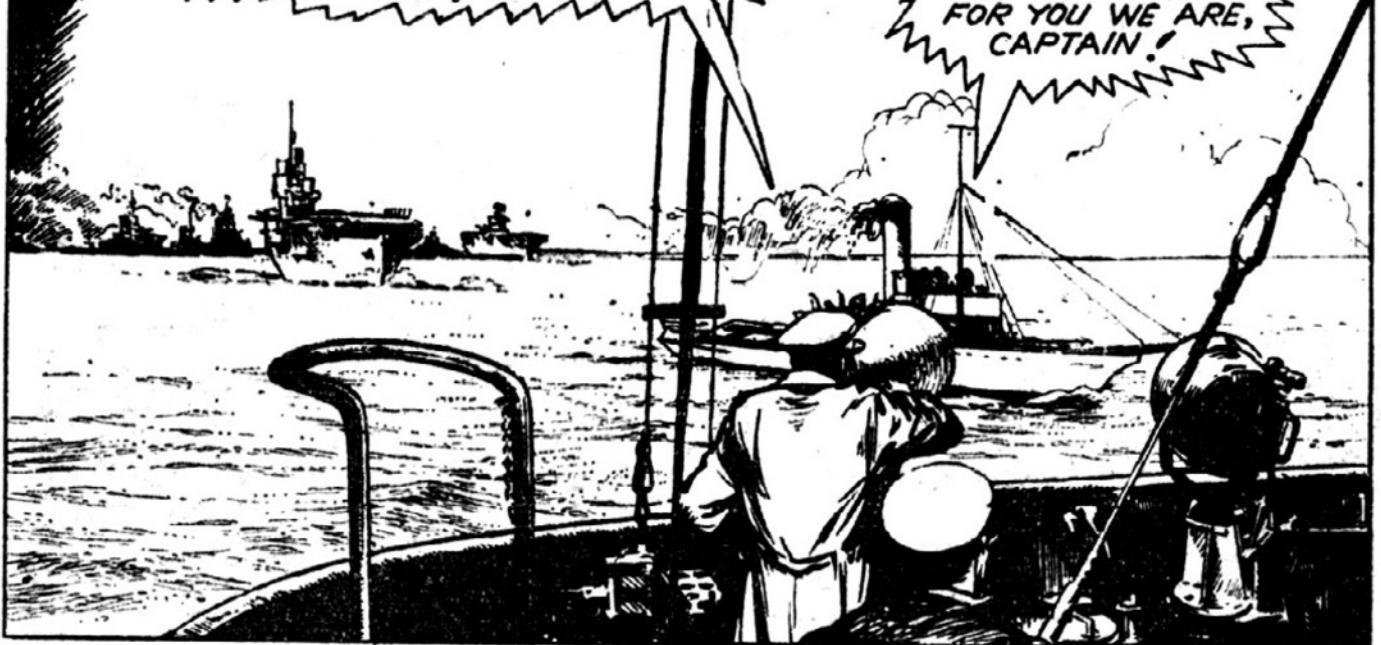
FOR TWO HOURS, THE *BRUGES* HEADED SOUTH ON HER NEW COURSE. LIGHT WAS
FAILING WHEN A CRY FROM THE LOOKOUT ROUSED THE TWO WEARY AUSSIES...



SHIP AFTER PROUD FIGHTING SHIP SLID POWERFULLY PAST THE LITTLE HOSPITAL SHIP, ON THEIR WAY TO THE ATTACK. AND NOT ONE OF THE MEN WHO MANNED THEM KNEW HOW MUCH THEY OWED TO HER.

YOU'D BEST CLEAR OUT OF THIS TO SEAWARD, NIPPER! THERE'S A TRANSPORT WHICH WILL ESCORT YOU BACK TO BASE IF YOU'RE IN TROUBLE! YOU OUGHT NOT TO BE IN THESE WATERS!

IT'S LUCKY FOR YOU WE ARE, CAPTAIN!



NOW THE *BRUGES* WOULD NOT BE ALONE ON HER VOYAGE BACK ACROSS THE HAZARDOUS PACIFIC. HER TROUBLES WERE OVER. BUT ONE MAN WAS NOT THERE TO SHARE THE AUSSIES' JUBILATION.

WELL, I RECKON WE MADE IT, SARGE!

RECKON SO, HERB! NOW LET'S GO FIND THE DOC!



THE YOUNG DOCTOR WHO HAD LOST HIS FAITH IN MEN HAD FOUGHT SAVAGELY AND KILLED IN BITTERNESS... AND NOW HE HAD FOUND THAT FAITH AGAIN IN THE WORK OF MERCY WHICH FIGHTING MEN WILL ALWAYS NEED WHEN THE FIGHTING IS OVER!

AREN'T YOU GOING TO CELEBRATE, DOC?

I HAVE MY PATIENTS TO ATTEND TO, SERGEANT... YES, AND SOME OF THEM ARE JAPS! SOMETIMES MEN HAVE TO KILL... BUT I STILL THINK HEALING IS MORE IMPORTANT!



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